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ABSTRACT

The position of assistant principal has been virtually ignored and sometimes maligned. Based on perspectives that arise from administrative theory, career development research, and school administration studies, this document describes the special nature of the assistantship, daily work, rewards, and frustrations. Five chapters include: (1) "What Is Special about Assistant Principals?; (2) "How Do Assistant Principals Get Their Jobs?; (3) "Progress in Understanding the Assistant's Role"; (4) "Opportunities for Improving the Assistant Principalship"; and (5) "A New and Different Assistant Principalship." By analyzing the selection and socialization of two assistants, key processes are identified that mold those who become assistants and filter out others. A discussion of the problems encountered by the assistant in his/her work, position, and role is followed by possible policies, programs, and strategies for creative solutions. Two dominant themes are (1) the need to understand the assistant's role and find ways to improve it; and (2) by focusing on the assistant, we can uncover problems and identify new solutions for reconceptualizing school leadership. Each chapter contains its own summary. (150 references) (LAP)

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Leadership Choices and Challenges

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Catherine Marshall

The Assistant Principal

Leadership Choices and Challenges

The assistant principal is the "invisible man"... stereotypical, but true.

Why? First, because the position has been virtually ignored by educational scholars and, second, because very few women are accepted for this entry to school administration. Both of these circumstances are ones the educational community needs to examine critically and take steps to change.

In this new book, Catherine Marshall provides the most comprehensive study of what assistant principals do and who they are, as well as how these "administrators-in-training" can take charge of their careers. The end result is not only an important study of an overlooked position, but a valuable guide to professional development.

A recent study of U.S. school superintendents indicates that more than 95% are men. If, as Marshall contends, the assistant principal is the first step in the administrative career ladder, and if we are to encourage more women in roles of educational leadership, today's administrators must change their views and appoint more women to the position.

In her preface, Marshall states, "The assistant principalship is the beginning of a career socialization process. Principals and superintendents are the outcome of this process.... The assistant principalship is an assessment position through which ... processes are used to decide who should move into higher positions of administration."

(continued on back flap)

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The Assistant Principal

Leadership Choices and Challenges

Catherine Marshall

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Preface

The assistant principal's day may include intervening in a passionate fight between two eighth graders, chairing a curriculum integration task force, and serving as substitute for the ailing chorus director. What motivates someone to take this varied and variable job? How are the jobs and tasks of assistant principals designed and structured? What training and selection prepare them? Are assistant principals really needed—and if so, what for? How can districts and state policies improve the assistant principalship? How can assistant principals take charge of their careers and make theirs a satisfying position?

The assistant is often ignored and sometimes maligned. *The Encyclopedia of School Administration and Supervision* (Gorton, Schneider, & Fisher, 1988) in its selection of "administrative roles" does not mention the assistant principal at all.

This book is the first one to focus on the position, delineating the particular roles, the processes of selection and socialization, the problems, and the opportunities in the assistantship. Yes, the job parallels the principalship in many ways, but this book pays attention to the unique issues: the issue of the person in the entry-level position, the "mop-up" nature of the tasks, dependency on the principal, and the particular ambiguities, especially in an era with reforms called "accountability," "teacher empowerment," and "school-site management."

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Stray comments and observations led to my interest in the assistant principalship. When I was a public school teacher, I chuckled over the junior high school students' caricatures of the assistant principal as a gangster or Nazi or thug. The task of chief disciplinarian and hall patroller has traditionally fallen to the assistant. As a researcher on educational administration careers, I noted educators' acceptance of the assistantship as a necessary but undesirable step up the career ladder (and one that has been difficult for women to obtain).

As a professor of graduate students entering and moving up the administrative career hierarchy, I have participated in fascinating discussions as educators described frustration over dilemmas in the assistant principal role. They describe feeling underpaid and unappreciated by the public and feeling a sense of helplessness over seemingly intractable societal problems—family breakups, poverty, poor health and nutrition, racism, drugs, violence—that spill over into the tasks of schools. Assistant principals are the front line dealing with these problems.

Finally, as a scholar reviewing the literature, I noted an abundance of material on superintendents and principals but little on the assistant principal. I reasoned that the assistant principalship is the *beginning* of a career socialization process. Principals and superintendents are the *outcome* of this process. Educators who enter the assistant principal position are in the process of becoming school administrators. As they do their daily tasks, chat with fellow administrators, possibly become protégés of more powerful administrators, attend professional meetings and university classes, and observe "how things are done around here," they learn what constitutes school administration. They make choices about whether to adopt the values and behaviors that predominate in the professional culture of school administration. This choice making is a critical process that determines who will become a school leader. At the same time, these individuals are being evaluated: Their choices, values, actions, attitudes, and affiliations are observed by career gatekeepers. The assistant principalship is an assessment position through which formal and informal district and professional processes are used to decide who should move into high positions of administration.

Yet, few scholars devote attention to assistant principals. The National Association of Secondary Principals (NASSP) has

issued a position paper (*Restructuring the Assistant Principal,* 1991a); but no book is available. Few have noticed the person, the position, and the crucial processes that occur in it. A cursory examination of educational textbook indexes shows that assistant principals get much less mention than athletics.

The Assistant Principal: Leadership Choices and Challenges fills the gap. First, it *notices* the assistant, describing the daily work, the special nature of the position, the rewards and frustrations experienced by assistants. Then, by analyzing the selection and socialization of two assistants, it identifies key processes that mold those who become assistants and filter out others. Next, problems emerge as one focuses on the assistant's work, position, and role. One chapter describes these problems and another presents actual and possible policies, programs, and strategies for creative solutions. Thus the book offers practical insights for the educator plotting career strategy and for the professor, the superintendent, or the state policymaker trying to support excellent school leadership.

This book is based on perspectives that arise from administrative theory, career development research, and school administration studies. It also uses the practical advice of persons invested in various aspects of the public educational endeavor. By listening to their stories, comments, and suggestions, the outline for this book emerged. Two themes are evident in the book: First, the book asserts and demonstrates the need to understand the assistant's role and find ways to improve it. Second, the book illustrates how, by focusing on the assistant, we can uncover problems and identify new solutions for reconceptualizing school leadership. There is no better place to begin than with the assistant.

The chapters that follow will address the need for educators to raise questions concerning the nature of the assistant principalship, identify policy issues, describe the process of becoming an assistant principal, present recent research, and suggest opportunities and models for improving and enriching this unique and vital position.

About the Author

Catherine Marshall is Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Once a teacher in Rhode Island, she moved on to receive her Ph.D. from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, Los Angeles, then she joined the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania and Vanderbilt University before moving in 1991 to Chapel Hill. The ongoing goal of her teaching and research has been to use an interdisciplinary approach to analyze cultures—of schools, state policy systems, and the professional development of adults working in organizations. She has published extensively about the politics of education, qualitative methodology, and women's access to careers as well as about the socialization, language, and values in educational leadership. She is the author of *Culture and Education Policy in the American States* and *Designing Qualitative Research,* as well as numerous articles on the administrative career, especially the entrant, the assistant principal.

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What Is Special About Assistant Principals?

> Sometimes, at the end of the day, I really wonder why I took this job. It seems like only bawling out kids, picking up the jobs my principal dislikes, and having to tell teachers why they can't do something they're really excited about. But there have been times—like when I found a way to help teachers launch a neat project, like watching our team get to the finals in the debate competition—when I feel happy. Not many people know how much I put into making good things happen, but *I* know.
>
> —An anonymous, but typical, assistant principal

What do assistant principals do? How important are they to school systems? What motivates them to take such positions and what qualifies them to do so? These questions are seldom asked and rarely answered. Perhaps assistant principals are seen as uninteresting—as separate from instructional leadership in their mock-military discipline role and as people at the bottom rung of the administrative career ladder.

But the assistant principalship holds a critical position in education organizations for several reasons. First, it is a *frequent entry-level position for administrative careers.* A majority of assistant principals expect to move upward in administration. For this reason, assistant principalships often provide opportunities for observing and interacting with supervisors and learning the behaviors necessary for professional advancement (Austin & Brown, 1970; Gallant, 1980; Gorton &

Kettman, 1985; Gorton, 1987; Greenfield, 1985b; Ogilvie, 1977; Ortiz, 1982).

Second, assistant principals *maintain the norms and rules of the school culture.* They are usually the ones to experience the hardest discipline problems. Social issues like poverty, racism, and family disruption help define the world in which assistant principals find themselves.

Directly related to patrolling hallways, monitoring students and their needs, assistant principals must *frequently play the role of mediator,* addressing the conflicts that emerge among teachers, students, and the community. Often it is the demands of federal, state, and local school policies that must be regulated by the assistant principals. Mediation occurs for the sake of maintaining an environment of calm and order; without proper attention to this area of concern, chaos can easily arise.

Finally, assistant principals *encounter daily the fundamental dilemmas of school systems.* They talk with teenagers deciding how to stay in school while pregnant, with parents angry that their child must be bused to achieve desegregation, and with teachers who resent and resist being monitored. They cope when there are not enough qualified substitutes and the English as a Second Language teacher is ill. Their day is a microcosm representing the array of issues that arise when children bring society inside the schools' walls. As a result, they have developed as a prime group of individuals who could, if asked, generate a unique picture of the existing condition of public education.

Unanswered Questions

Recently, I heard a high school assistant principal characterize the position as "the guy who goes up and down the corridors pushing kids back into classrooms." In fact, no one really understands the complexities, lack of satisfaction, and dilemmas within the role of the assistant principal. This chapter identifies the dilemmas—the problems with no simple answers. It tackles the questions raised by our typical assistant principal—questions like these: "What exactly is my job?" "Who knows or cares about what I do?" "How can I find fulfillment in this work?"

Yet, few researchers have paid attention to the assistant principalship. Those studies that have dealt with the topic have revealed several intriguing facts. For example, on the surface, there exist no substantial differences between the roles of the assistant principal in the junior or senior high schools in urban, suburban, or rural schools. Important differences, however, emerge below the surface. Gaertner's (1980) study found that, while 44% of elementary assistant principals are women, women are less likely to obtain secondary school assistant principalships. Croft and Morton (1977) also revealed that women are less likely to obtain assistant principalships in a rural or small town or city than in an urban setting. These facts raise questions: How are the secondary and elementary positions so different? Why are some assistant principalships "off limits" to most women?

Many questions still remain unexplored by researchers and policymakers. Little attention has been granted to the training and selection, job satisfaction, and motivation of assistant principals. Moreover, there exist few studies that have helped the assistant principal focus upon the ever-changing, ever-demanding functions of the position. An important unanswered question remains: As assistant principals deal with numerous duties during the course of a single day, how do they derive meaning and purpose from their work?

Focusing on the assistant principalship means looking at the administrative training, school culture, job roles, responsibilities, policies and structures of the organization, and daily challenges afforded this specific position. By noticing the interplay of these important elements, concerned teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and taxpayers can begin to understand the nature of the assistant principalship and its intrinsic value to the educational process.

By taking a look at what assistant principals do, we can begin to identify the special nature, the functions served, and the inherent dilemmas in the assistant principalship. Assistant principals do many of the same tasks as principals. A majority of their time is spent dealing with issues of school management, student activities and services, community relations, personnel, and curriculum and instruction. However, they lack the position, power, and status of the principal and remain dependent on the principal, who usually delineates their specific

tasks and responsibilities. Such dependency and ambiguity exacerbate the stress of working while being assessed—for their daily performance as an assistant is watched as "higher-ups" decide whether to sponsor or promote them.

What Do Assistant Principals Do: Tasks and Roles

Although specific job descriptions vary, most assistant principal positions have tasks in common. Assistant principals handle conferences with parents and students, which may be formal appointments to discuss and assess problems and create a plan to help a student improve or may be short impromptu responses to a crisis. A second major duty is handling behavior problems, ranging from a long-term strategy for monitoring to quick reaction to violations. Third, assistant principals work on the master schedule, the "roster" registration, and attendance as they plan for the smooth flow of people and events. Fourth, they counsel and guide students informally for their educational programs and vocations, basing their advice on information they get from constant monitoring of the activities, behavior, and performance of individuals.

Assistant principals also take on public relations tasks as a natural offshoot of work with parents and student activities. Some—not all—assistant principals take an interest in improving curriculum and teaching. With increased emphasis on monitoring and improving teachers, assistant principals are now expected to assist with classroom observation.

A 1988 survey documented assistant principals' tasks and compared them with assistants' tasks in 1965 (Pellicer, Anderson, Keefe, Kelly, & McLeary, 1988). Table 1.1 shows these shifts. Note the addition of duties in graduation, instructional methods, staff in-service, and teacher motivation and incentives in 1988.

Their tasks require assistant principals to work closely with their principals. They sometimes coordinate with another assistant principal. Frequently, they substitute for the principal. They have to work well on a team, be flexible, make quick decisions, and anticipate needs and problems (Austin & Brown,

TABLE 1.1 Assistant Principals' Ratings of Their Administrative Duties for Level of Discretionary Behavior

	1987		*1965*	
Duties	*Rank*	*%*	*Rank*	*%*
Student discipline	1	77	1	89
Evaluation of teachers	2	72	3.5	67
Student attendance	3	64	2	73
School policies	4	59	7	63
Special arrangements	5.5	57	3.5	67
School master schedule	5.5	57	5	66
Emergency arrangments	7	53	10	60
Instructional methods	8	52	*	*
Building use--school related	9	51	26	40
Orientation program for new students	10	50	16	51
Administrative representative at community functions	12.5	47	18	50
Informing public of school achievments	12.5	47	15	52
Graduation activities	12.5	47	*	*
Orientation program for new teachers	12.5	47	6	65
Faculty meetings	15	46	11	58
Substitute teachers	17	45	22	46
Teacher selection	17	45	13.5	54
Curriculum development	17	45	12	55
Teacher "duty" rosters	19	44	8.5	61
Assemblies	20	43	25	42
School public relations program	21.5	42	8.5	61
Innovations, experiments, and research	21.5	42	13.5	54
School daily bulletins	23	41	18	50
Liaison with community youth-serving agencies	25.5	38	18	50
Clerical services	25.5	38	21	47
Teacher incentives, motivation	25.5	38	*	*
School dances	25.5	38	20	48
Staff in-service	28	37	*	*
School calendars	29	35	23.5	45
School club program	30	30	23.5	45

SOURCE: Pellicer, Anderson, Keefe, Kelly, and McLeary (1988), p. 49
*These duties did not appear on the 1965 survey.

1970; Fulton, 1987; Gaertner, 1980; Joly, 1973; Norton & Kriekard, 1987; Rankin, 1973; Sprague, 1973). Personal and professional disputes, value conflicts, and conflicting styles and philosophies can be disastrous in such tight quarters; the assistant

most often adopts or adapts to the style and philosophy of the principal. Further, assistants are seldom expected to assert leadership by creating new projects or inspired initiatives. Risk taking must be limited; assistants must confine themselves to supportive and less visible tasks, leaving visible leadership tasks for the principal.

Role Ambiguity

The assistant principal does not have a consistent, well-defined job description, delineation of duties, or way of measuring outcomes from accomplishment of tasks (Black, 1980; Potter, 1980; Reed & Connors, 1982).

Role ambiguity means that the assistant principal's roles and duties include many "gray areas"—ill-defined, inconsistent, and at times incoherent responsibilities, roles, and resources. For example, assistant principals' responsibilities may not include employing substitutes but may include handling the problems that ensue when substitutes are not screened. Some assistants easily develop understandings about administrative responsibilities and assertively take charge of certain tasks, regardless of their formal role expectations. However, some assistant principals may experience lack of job satisfaction, emotional problems, a sense of futility, ineffectiveness, and lack of confidence caused by role ambiguity, particularly when the information provided about the job and the actual daily job requirements seem very different (Austin & Brown, 1970; Fulton, 1987; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, & Snock, 1964; Kelly, 1987; Norton & Kriekard, 1987).

Role Conflict and Role Overload

With so many tasks to perform, assistant principals find that their roles are at cross-purposes with each other. For example, an assistant principal might be required to help teachers develop coordinated curricula—a "teacher support" function. But this function conflicts with the monitoring, supervising, and evaluating functions. The assistant may be working with a teacher as a colleague in one meeting and, perhaps one hour later, the same assistant may be meeting to chastise the same

teacher for noncompliance with the district's new homework policy. When they must monitor teachers' compliance, assistants have difficulty maintaining equal collegial and professional relationships with them. Also, assistant principals often serve as intermediaries between teachers and students and as the main line of communication to the principal—the person in the middle among constituents and participants in schools.

Assistant principals experience role conflict when the immediate demands of the school get in the way of doing the work they value as an expression of their professionalism. Constant monitoring of student discipline, for instance, may require so much time that assistant principals must forsake creative programming in curricular innovation, proactive discipline management, or making use of their special expertise. If assistant principals are expected to do everything the principal cannot get to, the situation will not allow them to take initiative or to focus on special projects.

Finally, assistant principals experience role conflict and overload when it is not possible to perform adequately in all of the assigned roles. This situation is exacerbated when roles and duties are ambiguous, never measured, and never ending. An assistant principal who is expected to "respond to the needs of community groups" never knows which activities, just how many meetings, or which groups to meet to be performing adequately in this role.

Many assistant principals who try to do well in all assigned duties *and* make special contributions by devising special projects will feel overloaded. The stress is heightened when there is no process for stating specific expectations or measuring performance. There seems to be no end to the ever-evolving expectations and no time taken to say "well done!"

Role conflict and overload occur when job responsibilities demand so much time, energy, and emotion that little time is left for either the assistant principal's personal life or professional development. Many assistant principals give up on advanced education and sacrifice time with friends and family as they try to meet the constant demands of the school. As a result, they may become angry, confused, and depressed. They are suffering from the dilemmas of role conflict and overload.

Job "Dissatisfaction"

Assistant principals who are rewarded for their efforts (by the organization, by the profession, or by their own sense of what is important) should have a sense of job satisfaction. However, some research shows that assistant principals are dissatisfied in their positions. The 1970 Austin and Brown study found that many felt they were given low-satisfaction duties such as discipline and attendance. Further, their multitude of job tasks rarely allowed them to "see a thing through" to its completion (Austin & Brown, 1970, p. 79). The study showed that administrators believe that most of the assistant principals' assignments do not give them a high level of discretionary action. Their work is constrained by rules and understandings about their "place" and limits on their range of initiative.

A study in urban Houston and town and rural areas of Kansas (Croft & Morton, 1977) found that assistant principals felt higher satisfaction with duties requiring expertise and administrative ability rather than with those requiring clerical-related ability. The study also showed assistant principals as having higher satisfaction than Austin and Brown (1970) reported. Nonetheless, assistant principals deal with the dilemma of carving out a way of getting satisfaction from this risky and sometimes powerless position. They have a great deal of responsibility but little discretion and are under constant scrutiny. As they seek satisfiers, they respond to pushes and pulls from their specific school site, their sense from previous professional experience about what is important, and the school systems' rewards and incentives.

Much can be learned about job satisfaction by examining why people leave the assistant principalship. Austin and Brown found that assistant principals left for better salaries and higher status. A significant number left seeking greater professional challenges, including greater involvement in the school's educational program and a desire to promote innovations. One would conclude that they seldom find these satisfactions in the assistantship. A recent study (Calabrese & Adams, 1987) found that assistant principals' sense of powerlessness and alienation were greater than principals'. Those with advanced degrees, especially the doctorate, had much higher perceptions of alienation and powerlessness.

Career Incentives

Probably the most powerful reward and incentive for most assistant principals lies in the possibility of using the position as a stepping-stone to administrative careers, particularly for line positions (as opposed to staff specialist positions). The assistant principal may perform the same tasks as principals—budget, facilities, student affairs, curriculum and instruction, public relations—tasks that prepare them for moving up the hierarchy.

In school administrative careers, a common career route to the superintendency is that of teacher, secondary curriculum specialist, secondary assistant principal, secondary principal, associate superintendent, then superintendent. The elementary principalship appears to be a dead-end position while the secondary principalship provides opportunities for districtwide linkages (Carlson, 1972; Gaertner, 1980; Gallant, 1980; Ortiz, 1982).

Thus there exists a real possibility that good performance as an assistant principal will directly lead to the next administrative line position, the beginning of the march up the career ladder. According to norms of the profession, career success in administration is measured by the attainment of higher power, status, and pay and a higher administrative position in the hierarchy.

Many view the assistant principalship as a step up the career ladder. Few practicing administrators prefer to remain in the assistant principalship; the Austin and Brown study showed that between 40% and 50% of all assistant principals advance to other professional posts. A minority (39% urban, 29% suburban) of the respondents expected to make the assistant principalship a lifetime career when they entered the field, while a majority expected to be promoted within their own districts. This situation creates role dilemmas from which two questions emerge:

(1) What is the level of effort exerted by assistant principals who perceive themselves as simply "passing through"?

(2) What happens to assistant principals who realize they have plateaued at the assistant principal position?

It is important to examine whether the assistant principalship has rewards or incentives in itself for those who will not move up.

Moving into the assistant principalship is considered (by many educators and in terms of pay scales) to be a promotion, a reward, and a signal that one has potential for leadership. However, some assistant principal tasks are routine, possess low visibility, lack evaluation and review, and provide no opportunity for creative, risky projects and thus no opportunity for special recognition and reward. For example, being the disciplinarian may not provide the assistant principal with visibility or allow interaction with people in higher administrative positions.

Assistant principals who have little opportunity to move into higher positions (because of their tasks, low turnover in administrative positions, or district restrictions) are plateaued, facing the possibility of ending their careers in the assistant principalship. They are left to find rewards and incentives within their current position.

However, some assistant principal tasks, jobs, assignments, or activities do offer greater opportunities for exposure to superiors, provide for frequent reviews, allow for expansion of knowledge and exercise of discretion, and allow involvement in special, risky projects; they allow/encourage assistant principals to create and get credit and feedback that enhances job satisfaction and opportunity for advancement. Typically, these tasks are on the boundary between the school and the community or the other units of the school system (e.g., task forces managing state policy, PTA, district computer committees). When they develop interpersonal skills with community people, superiors, and other adults, assistant principals can use their positions to learn skills for career mobility. Assistant principals who are assigned or who assume such tasks are more likely to get the attention and sponsorship of superiors and the motivation to move into higher positions.

The strongest motivator for entering the assistant position is the opportunity for upward mobility. There is built-in temptation for the assistant to concentrate his or her efforts in areas that help upward mobility rather than in areas focusing on the immediate needs of the programs and people in his or her own school.

Thus we see that the position and the ambiguous job description present problems for assistants and for schools. While they perform important tasks, assistants seldom are rewarded adequately. Often their tasks are conflicting. While schools cry out for leadership and creative efforts for reform, assistant principals' opportunities for initiative are constrained by "assumptive worlds" of understanding. This presents problems but also policy opportunities. Professional associations and policymakers seeking ways to support new leadership will do well to identify the dilemmas of assistant principals.

Policy Concerns in the Assistant Principal Role

Identifying Appropriate Training and Selection Systems

Assistant principals are usually selected because of their visibility and success as teachers, department heads, or counselors. Likewise, the administrative candidates who conform to work requirements and promote tradition are most likely to be selected for promotion. It is not surprising that many talented, innovative educational leaders are rejected for entry-level administrative positions in the process. Many others with potential for creative educational leadership may look at the assistant principal position and decide not to enter administration. The need for good training and selection guidelines is a pressing policy issue.

State policymakers, professional associations, and university professors ponder and debate the formal training and experience required for administrative positions. We are still trying to develop a set of understandings for the field of educational administration and describe the appropriate skills and functions for administrators (Greenfield, 1982; National Policy Board, 1989a, 1989b; Silver, 1981; Thompson, 1988).

Formal course work does not transform people into good educational leaders (Bridges & Baehr, 1971; Pitner, 1982). Further, there exist very few specific, definable criteria for selecting administrators. Good efforts (e.g., the National Association of

Secondary School Principals [NASSP] Assessment Centers) at training and evaluation may rely on assumptions that no longer apply. The reforms and the pressing problems of the 1990s require reexamination of assumptions about educational administration. For entry-level positions like the assistant principalship, previous administrative experience would be an inappropriate prerequisite because it is usually the first formal administrative position. No evaluation instruments have been devised specifically for measuring the ability to manage the assistant principalship. Tests would be difficult to devise because the assistant principal's tasks are so varied. Therefore, university programs, state certification requirements, staff development, selection systems, and professional association meetings and publications are often designed with only a best-guess effort to address the requirements of the assistant principalship.

Encouraging Innovators

School systems need vigorous imaginative leadership to meet the challenges presented by community change, declining resources, and national concern about the quality of education. Numerous studies have raised the question of whether educational leaders have the ability and affinity for being creative in addressing schooling problems. The selection system for administration typically weeds out people with divergent ideas. Lortie (1975) shows that teachers have a conservative bias. Therefore, assistant principals and other administrators are selected from a pool of rather conservative people. The more creative, imaginative, reform-minded, and innovative people have already been filtered out. Then the selection and training process continues this filtering by discouraging those with innovative, divergent, and creative thinking.

In the process of training and selecting individuals for administrative positions, organizations teach a person to "make decisions by himself, as the organization would like him to decide" (March & Simon, 1958, p. 169). They are socialized to think and work within the status quo. People who raise questions and challenge the system are more likely to be viewed as misfits than as potential leaders. People who have conflicting feelings about administration, school programs, and incumbent

administrators, and who challenge existing practice, will be less likely to be seen as trustworthy and loyal enough to be included in the administrative group.

People who are different (either because of different backgrounds or ideas or because they are minorities or women) take special risks when they separate from teachers and attempt to become administrators—they risk becoming the "marginal man" (Merton, 1960), who does not fit with teachers and who never gets included with administrators. So, people who do get selected as administrators are likely to be those very much like previous administrators, people whose ways of thinking and acting coincide with tradition.

The tendency of school administrators to make safe decisions, avoid risk, and make short-term plans for measurable programs prohibits innovation. Thompson (1967) explains these tendencies by pointing out that administrators have incomplete knowledge of cause/effect relationships. Further, he notes that "organizations can thwart the exercise of discretion by establishing inappropriate assessment criteria as bases for rewards and penalties" (Thompson, 1967, p. 120). People who have ambiguous positions, who are evaluated by vague or inappropriate criteria, are very dependent upon others' judgment. They risk losing power and rewards when they exercise discretion. So there is an administrative bias in favor of certainty, a bias in favor of quantifiable results, and a reliance on precedent rather than innovation. Intolerance for ambiguity and favoring quantifiable measures of cost-efficiency rather than wide-ranging discussions of social goals are natural reactions to administrators' need to show their ability to maintain control over elements in the organizational environment.

Administrators, when overloaded by work demands and worried that they will be judged for efficiency rather than for creative leadership, will make safe decisions, avoiding ventures (e.g., in democratic leadership, community involvement) that tend to decrease their control and increase their risk. They will tend to bend to political pressure when they are too uncertain about the best stance to take in a conflict (Benedict, 1982; Noblit, Hare, & Berry, 1985). They will tend to put their energies into programs that will be understood, assessed accurately, and rewarded. They are unlikely to search for creative or

long-term ways to address dilemmas in schooling. And the assistants who analyze the selection processes (for entry into these and into higher positions) will learn that risk taking and divergent thinking can hurt their careers.

Thus a pressing policy question remains: What recruitment, selection, reward, and assessment system will require and support schools to include innovators, leaders of reform, builders of school-community integration, participatory managers?

Encouraging Instructional Leaders

Another pressing question for those who train and select educational leaders concerns how we can identify, encourage, support, select, and reward administrators to care about the instructional program. There is a growing body of research that indicates that effective schools have, among other things, people who take leadership in curriculum and instructional programming (Cohen & Manasse, 1982; Edmonds & Frederickson, 1978; Glatthorn & Newberg, 1984). On the other hand, some reform efforts aim to empower teachers—the educators most closely attuned to classroom and curricular concerns—to have more decision-making power, discretion, and responsibility for instructional leadership. But can and do site-level administrators (assistants or principals) "lead" instruction?

Who owns the "instructional leadership" job and how is it coordinated? Analyses of the daily activities of principals and assistant principals show that their time is taken up with personnel, school management, student activities, and behavior, although they claim to value instructional leadership and program development functions (Gorton & McIntyre, 1978; Greenfield, 1985a, 1985b; Hess, 1985; Kelly, 1987).

Thus, under current traditions and structures, the assistant can be an instructional leader only in rare instances. Further, in leaving teaching to enter the administrative ranks, assistant principals may lose credibility in instructional matters (Greenfield, 1985b; Little, 1984; Spady, 1985). The effective schools literature indicates that maintaining safe and orderly environments, buildingwide awareness, and commitment to high levels of student progress are part of instructional leadership. But being an assistant principal may actually undermine educators' ability and affinity for

instructional leadership if they go on to higher administrative positions. Quite possibly, the duties of assistant principals stop them from developing as instructional leaders. Often their tasks take them away from classrooms and curriculum and place them in roles of managing rather than working with teachers. One must ask: Do teachers, assistant principals, and principals with training, ability, and affinity for instructional leadership actually get career rewards and promotions?

Observation of assistant principals (Marshall, 1985a; Reed & Himmler, 1985) raises doubts that their tasks and roles allow them to develop competencies in curriculum leadership and teacher supervision. The overarching concern for maintaining organizational stability is the center of their daily activity. Policymakers must pay attention to the assistant principalship in the debates and directives aimed at locating and supporting instructional leadership.

Providing Equal Opportunity for Women and Minorities

As a key position for entry into administration, the assistant principalship is an important focus for policy concerns about equal opportunity. Assuring access to administrative positions for women and minorities is a matter of equity and also a matter of providing role models for students, for expanding the definition of competent leadership, and for maximizing the use of a pool of talented personnel.

Women and minorities have not attained administrative positions as often as men, even during the 1970s and 1980s when affirmative action policies were in place. Women are more likely to be in staff positions (consultants, supervisors of instruction) than in the assistant principal and principal line positions that are direct lines to the superintendency.

Several studies of minority representation in administration indicate that minority administrators often lost their jobs or were demoted during school consolidations in response to desegregation mandates and/or economic constraints (Coursen, 1975, 1989). For example, in Florida's consolidation movement in the 1960s, nonminority principals often retained their positions or gained higher positions while minority principals

more often were demoted to assistant principalships or to special projects administration, with limited power, or placed back in the classroom (Abney, 1978). Affirmative action policies have not compensated for these losses. Ortiz (1982) also found a general pattern of minorities being placed in administrative positions to supervise minorities and special projects, positions that were neither at the center of power and decision making nor the career path toward higher positions.

Minority men are relatively well represented in assistant principalships; women fare less well. Gaertner (1980), in her analysis of administrative career patterns, found that women are less likely to attain the positions (particularly secondary assistant principalships and principalships) that lead directly to the highest administrative positions. Further, women teachers are more likely to be in elementary schools, where assistant principals are few and far between. Prolman's (1982) study of principals found that, among principals who had prior administrative experience, men were far more likely to have held an assistant principalship. In her sample, only one woman had held an assistant principalship prior to her principalship. Most women had held positions in central office, as directors of programs or as supervisors. It appears that the assistant principalship is a good career stepping-stone for men but not for women. Policymakers need to examine the function of the assistant principalship to see how it can be altered to promote equity in administration.

Empowerment and Participatory Management

Principals have considerable autonomy not only in assigning tasks to assistant principals but also in defining the style of the working relationship between the principal and the assistant principal. Austin and Brown's research (1970, p. 47) found that assistant principals had few tasks allowing problem solving and discretionary action and concluded with the belief that "a do-as-you-are-told policy in assigning duties to members of an administrative team is a very short-sighted one as measured by the well-being of the school." They found that "principals more frequently than assistant principals believe that assistant principals are invested with a substantial measure of responsibility for important functions of the school that require the exercise

of good judgment" (p. 47). These findings may reflect a tendency to keep assistant principals in a subordinate position. They certainly reflect a specific chain of command, a hierarchy with the principal controlling the work of the assistant principal. Such a view of administration seems inappropriate for administration of an organization where the workers are fellow professionals. Emphasis on hierarchical control can subvert efforts to work cooperatively toward common goals. District policymakers should be concerned about the professional development of aspiring educational leader and direct attention to the assistant principalship.

Participatory management strategies include incorporating lower-level management in decision making so that their concerns and ideas for appropriate action will be heard. Administrators who have a part in making policy are more likely to implement the policy in their school sites (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978), and communication and cooperation are enhanced. In addition, such participation gives administrators a sense of satisfaction and belonging (Gorton, 1987; Shockley & Smith, 1981).

When principals see the assistant principal only as someone to do the undesirable tasks, they lose the opportunity to multiply administrative efficacy. Such a "mop-up" assistant principal merely supplements the work of the principal. However, principals who work as administrative teams with their assistants could *multiply*, not just supplement, their effectiveness. Such an administrative team approach is more than the sum of its parts. School district policymakers need to identify structures for supporting teamwork at the school site.

To establish a climate for participatory management at the school level, principals need to be trained to create the structures and the attitudes that facilitate participation. In addition, principals need to recognize their responsibility to provide their professional colleagues with opportunities for satisfying work, adequate support, advanced training, and effective resources. Principals who view the assistant principal as the person who does everything that the principal dislikes undermine the possibility for administrative teamwork. On the other hand, principals who learn a more collegial and less hierarchical style of leadership will get the best from their fellow professional educators (assistant principals, teachers, specialists, and other support staff).

The Plateaued Assistant Principal

The Austin and Brown study showed that, in the early 1970s, a majority of assistant principals viewed their position as a necessary career step to achieving higher positions. However, when upward mobility is not possible, what happens to these people? Many assistant principals must face the reality that they will end their careers in the same position. Many entered administration late in their work lives. Others are seen as particularly valuable in the position and hence will not be moved. Others are labeled as potentially troublesome if promoted; still others are viewed as "not fitting in" as they defy the assumptive worlds. And in districts with declining enrollment, there simply exist no viable opportunities for advancement. Such realities are frequently faced with a sense of failure and frustrated aspiration. Yet these realities continue to confront educators as they sense their careers reaching a plateau and the possibility of upward movement in the career becomes more and more remote.

The frustration of the plateaued assistant principal is exacerbated by the assumption that success means upward mobility. The hierarchy, status, and reward system in education supports that assumption.

The frustration is intensified when the assistant principal is required to spend long hours in tasks that are unpleasant and that have no clear, measurable outcomes. Under these conditions, the assistant principal has little power or opportunity to redefine tasks or plan for better management.

Can the assistant principalship be defined in such a way that it is seen as a valued and desirable position? Are there policies and structures that would enable people who feel no pressure, obligation, or desire to move into a higher position to find fulfillment and continuous challenge as "career assistant principals"? This is a concern for educators and policymakers.

Summary

A close analysis of the daily work of assistant principals provides a picture of their important functions at the school site.

However, the analysis also reveals unanswered questions and opportunities for improvement through policy. By focusing on the assistant, policymakers could affect instructional leadership, innovation, and equity for women and minorities as well as re-create the position to be more than just a career stepping-stone. Most assistants would welcome such attention.

2

How Do Assistant Principals Get Their Jobs?

To analyze the process by which assistant principals learn their abilities and roles, we will look at two case histories of assistant principals, illustrating some very common elements in assistant principals' learning and the processes for attaining assistant principal positions. The cases will be used to identify the issues in training and selection and possible alterations for improvement.[1]

The Case of Tim George

Tim George's skills just "grew like Topsy." He never attended any staff development or university courses that taught him to carry out his daily tasks except for a workshop about creative discipline. He always had read articles about innovative curriculum in the publication put out by his professional association, but generally he had not learned assistant principal skills from any courses or reading. In his frank, just-between-you-and-me moments, Tim denounced the education courses in his master's degree program. He once said:

> You wouldn't believe one prof—he showed slides of his trip to Chile so he could justify his tax deduction! I never really grasped the statistics in the class on testing and measurement but I got a B+ anyway. I did get a better picture of what kids are going through in the courses on human development but I never could figure out how to fit that into anything like managing crowds of them at a basketball game.

Tim admitted, however, that he often selected courses on the basis of their convenient time or their reputation as "gut courses" and that his choice of college programs was confined by his desire to get the master's degree and administrative credential cheaply at the closest college.

So, then, how did Tim George acquire the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that enable him to perform as an assistant principal? "It's real difficult to tell," admits Tim.

> I think it all came from just *doing* things and watching other people do things. When I was a teacher I knew a lot about what the principal was doing because I was one of those rovers, without my classroom. The principal asked me to help with early morning crises like substitutes and late buses. I saw how he managed staff, parents, how he kept things under control. I learned a lot from watching him. I guess the best breakthrough came after the time I complimented him on how he cooled out two mothers who were upset about our sex education program. He explained to me how he assessed the situation and how he figured he had better be very careful to calm their fears but still uphold district policy. From that time on he'd tell me stories about how he handled things. I learned a lot from him.

Many experiences, even from childhood, gave Tim some of the training that helped him to be seen as an effective assistant principal. He felt that playing basketball in high school, working in a grocery store during college, having the support and understanding of his wife (who was tolerant of his long working hours and who did not complain when their "extra luxury money" went for his tuition as he worked for his administrator's certificate), and coaching the Little League team (which included two school board members' children) helped him in his position.

During his four years as a teacher, Tim George went through the usual problems of controlling classes, getting along with other teachers, and feeling that nobody appreciated how difficult it is to be a teacher. Over time, he began to think that tasks of teaching and classroom management were not challenging enough; he should do something other than teaching. Tim was also learning a great deal about teamwork, school spirit, school-community relations, and basic crowd control as coach of the junior high basketball team.

While he was a teacher, the superintendent asked Tim to serve on several district committees—one on equalizing coaches' pay and implementing Title IX and one for coordinating the social studies curriculum so that students would have appropriate and sequential curriculum from elementary to senior high. Working on these committees gave Tim the opportunity to talk with principals and teachers from other schools. He rather enjoyed representing his school, helping define the issues, gathering information, and making presentations to small groups. Tim's principal asked him to do things more frequently, such as oversee the after-school recreation activities, prepare reports for the superintendent, and even work during the summer on planning schedules for the next year. Every time the principal left the building, he appointed Tim to aid the assistant principal.

Tim was especially proud of his master's project—he convinced his own and another junior high principal to let him implement, for one semester, a behavior modification approach on their "top ten most incorrigible problem kids." The semester was an exhausting one for Tim. In addition to the project, he had to manage his regular classes and troubleshoot in two schools. He devised measures and demonstrated successful results. District administrators applauded when he presented the results at one of their meetings.

Tim was probably the first person to know that the current assistant principal wanted to move out of the assistant principalship. He was not surprised when central office sent a notice advertising the job opening to each school, to the local university, and to the state administrator association that stated simply:

Immediate opening: Junior High Assistant Principal
Particular Duties: to be arranged
Qualifications: experience in some administrative duties;
Master's degree and Administrator Certification preferable
Salary: Negotiable
Apply by January 12

January 12 was three days after the notice was sent, yet eight people applied. The selection committee consisted of the principal, the guidance counselor, and the president of the PTA.

Although he initially felt confident, Tim had become nervous during the selection process. *He* knew that the principal depended upon him but he was not sure how well the principal knew that. He knew that the PTA loved him, and he had served them well, but the guidance counselor might push for some unknown who had several degrees. The competition included Eleanor Bowen (voted outstanding teacher in the high school) and Bo Tomlinson (high school social studies teacher, winning football coach, and boyhood friend of the school board president). He only knew about them through gossip; all other applicants were just worrisome mysteries.

All during his interview, Tim spent more time trying to figure out what the committee wanted than thinking out his answers. First they asked about the courses he had taken; then they asked him his views on school-community relations. He really had problems when they asked why he wanted the position and what he expected to be doing in five years. The interviewing was upsetting. He knew that he had stiff competition. Also, the committee did not give him a chance to talk about the things he had done. Instead, it was as if they were more interested in his *opinions* and his ability to spew out some line off the top of his head without offending anyone. He left the interview in despair, knowing that the others, coming from other schools, would be able to look good by talking about their accomplishments.

The next day, the principal offered Tim the job. He complimented Tim's past contributions to the schools and expressed pleasure and relief that Tim would immediately take over assistant principal tasks. They negotiated over salary and discussed the process of getting school board approval. One

school board member was harping on instructional leadership and had clearly wanted Eleanor Bowen. There were also questions about Tim's age and the fact that he had not taken many certification courses. They agreed that Tim could complete course work within a year. Finally, the selection committee asserted that their process had come up with the best candidate. There was unanimous approval, and Tim was on the job before the week had ended.

The principal told Tim later, in confidence, that the selection committee was able to weed out many of applicants just by phoning principals, a few college professors, and a few other trusted educators. Some applicants were described as troublemakers, difficult, uppity, and grandiose planners. Others were eliminated because they hadn't taken many courses for advanced degrees or certification. Some were eliminated just because they "looked fishy." For example, why would a woman from out of state be applying unless she was having trouble in her current position? Or why would a man who had his doctorate and had already been an elementary principal in a small district want an assistant principalship? After these applicants were weeded from the batch, Tim still looked the best. Of the three finalists, he could most easily slip into the tasks and there would be no need for the principal to show him the goals, the problems, the constraints, and the routines. The principal complimented Tim's performance in the interview, saying that he showed energy, willingness, and a good attitude.

It was natural that, on being appointed junior high assistant principal, Tim would be assigned the task of disciplinarian. He says that he learned by doing the job, but he had some rude-awakening experiences.

> The first week on the job I tried to work on the plans for integrating the social studies curriculum—when they hired me they were really impressed with my work on that committee, but my time was eaten up by patrolling halls, cooling down students who were acting out! My behavior modification approach didn't work after a while; most of the kids got wise to it. Then I had another shock the time we had parents demonstrating outside our school—they were demanding "the truth" about the amount of asbestos in the school. We didn't have any answers, the superintendent had been avoiding

the issue, and the press was hot on it. The principal was away at a meeting so I was really put on the spot, totally unprepared. Well, I somehow muddled through, but the kicker was that I found out that my principal had *planned* to be away, knowing these demonstrators were coming! I was really upset, but I was forced to realize that it was *my* job to do anything the principal couldn't or didn't want to do, and I'd better not complain about it. He said we were a team, and it was clear that we had to present a united front—to teachers, students, parents, and the superintendent. Once I told him I wanted some of my time set aside for implementing the social studies curriculum and for analyzing the other areas of instruction—but he seemed angry instead of impressed, telling me to put more time into handling unruly kids. He did, however, use my ideas and we are now working toward curriculum improvement.

Tim described many instances in which he somehow learned what was good, acceptable practice by noticing his principal's reactions or by making his own informal assessments of results.

By his fourth year as assistant principal, Tim George was known throughout the district as a tough but effective assistant principal, and he was eager to move up. His principal would be retiring in another three years, so Tim suspected that he probably could walk into a principalship, if he could be patient. The disciplinarian tasks were getting to him, though. He really wanted a chance to try out some of his ideas on personnel motivation and curriculum. With one more course, he would pass the state and university requirements for principal certification. Tim felt that he had demonstrated his skills in the assistant principalship but he knew that, as currently construed, the assistant principalship was too limited a position for him. For his own satisfaction, he would have to find a new position soon.

The Case of Mary Brown

Mary Brown had taught for 12 years. She loved teaching high school kids but felt a restless need for change. When her curriculum innovations failed to allay the restlessness, she took such tasks as student association sponsor and chairperson of the

school board's committee on student-teacher-administrator relations. At that point, Mary's principal and several district-level administrators urged her to begin course work for administrator certification. It seemed an opportune time, because her two sons were in college. Her husband, absorbed in his own career, was pleased that Mary seemed so encouraged and excited about her own work.

The university course work was stimulating; it helped Mary attach names to things she had observed in schools. Courses on organizational behavior, school law, community relations, curriculum, school finance helped her to place daily school events and concerns in perspective. She found herself less upset about confrontations with parents; instead of raging about cost cutting in the school budget, she began to realize the importance of selling education to the taxpayers. Mary was especially fascinated by the organizational behavior course discussions revolving around workers' motivation and reward systems, and she enjoyed writing a paper applying the theory to teachers and students. The university program placed Mary in an internship, which provided her a wide variety of settings in which to sharpen her skills and to create and implement several projects that gave her visibility and credibility among administrators. Mary completed her administrator certification program and most of the course work for her doctorate.

Unfortunately, Mary's district was suffering from declining enrollment, and the only job openings were in special education. She had applied for five positions, all in neighboring districts, although her university adviser sent her details of positions all across the state. She was interviewed for an elementary principalship and for an assistant principalship, but in each case the districts chose someone from the district. Mary's principal, a staunch supporter, had moved to a distant superintendency. She missed his encouragement and advice. However, she kept an image of herself as an administrator alive by joining the new women administrators' network and volunteering for myriad tasks that would keep her hand in administration.

After four years of applying for administrative posts, Mary attained her first real administrative position as assistant principal in the junior high located in her own district. During the selection process, Mary learned that her competition for the

position were all men under age 32, with considerably less university training, expertise, and experience in curriculum and instruction (which had been stressed in the job announcement). She knew the job was hers, given her qualifications. In addition, the school board was embarrassed that they had not hired any women administrators in the last eight years.

Mary's story continues with her on-the-job learning and her pride in the projects she initiated for after-school activities. She was shocked and disillusioned, though, when her schemes for staff development and revitalizing the curriculum were put on the back burner in favor of constant discipline tasks. She was coming to a gradual realization that she must find another position because she constantly wanted to challenge her principal and make changes but could not.

The break from this no-win situation came when Mary received a fellowship along with her application for a doctoral program in reading. Mary once again threw herself into university course work (while continuing, albeit with reduced commitment, performing as assistant principal); she earned her doctorate and a position in central office as director of reading. Because she was 55 years old, she envisioned finishing her career in this position.

How Assistant Principals Learn Their Roles

The elements in Tim George's and Mary Brown's histories are similar to the role learning, selection, and career steps of many assistant principals. They show how people select themselves or are recruited. They show how the school site's needs affect selection, and they show how the formal selection procedures typically proceed. In this section, we will ferret out the common elements that characterize the way in which assistant principals are motivated for administration, attain an assistant principalship, are selected and trained, and learn to fill their positions.

Career Decision Making

As people make career choices, they feel pushes and pulls that come from (a) the picture they have of the desirability of

the career, (b) the likelihood that they can possess the required qualifications, and (c) the degree of supports they will have for taking the risk and extra effort to aspire. Generally, they try to figure out whether they can fit comfortably in the career.

Educators assessing the desirability of the administrative career will observe the tasks, functions, status, satisfactions, and stresses of those in the roles. As Tim and Mary observed assistant principals, the observations had different meanings for each. While the tasks and the people in them were already very much like Tim, this was not so for Mary. Most were males with backgrounds more similar to Tim's (e.g., short teaching career, experience in sports).

Personal and family considerations affect career decision making. Educators who observe the long hours, the heavy responsibility, and the strain on the family life of administrators may say "no way, not for me!" Some may conclude that requirements demand too much personal sacrifice; the financial and personal costs are too high for traveling to night classes for certification and advanced degrees, with no scholarships or district support for sabbaticals. Some have spouses who will resent the time away from family. Many, especially women, will decide that these personal costs are too high when there are no role models and, indeed, there are career norms that support males but present barriers to others.

Thus Tim's and Mary's progression to the point of aspiring to administrative careers has been a process of interaction between their own characteristics and the signals from the career environment. The positive signals were stronger for Tim; it was less obvious to Mary that she would fit comfortably in administration, the supports were less tangible, and her entry into the career was delayed.

Anticipating the Roles

People who are appointed to assistant principalships have already gone through "anticipatory socialization," a period in which they think about administration, watch administrators' activities, behaviors, and attitudes, and start to transform themselves into administrators. During this period, they separate themselves from other teachers and find ways to demonstrate

their abilities, favorable attitudes toward administration, and desire to become a part of the administrator group. In this way, they get the attention of superiors who may encourage, mentor, and support them and even become their sponsors. Aspirants have observed administrators intensely and long before they take on any administrative duties. They have found visible ways (e.g., Tim's coaching, Mary's course taking, and the district committee work of both) to try out the roles.

Role Model Learning

Assistant principals need more than a job description and abstract knowledge of the duties and skills in administration—they need to see how the particular tasks are carried out by effective practitioners. Assistant principals seek role models whose style in managing situations, students, parents, and superiors seems to be workable, practical, and functional. In many cases, assistant principals use several people as role models, acquiring the effective behaviors that best fit their own situations, abilities, and personalities. Frequently, role models become mentors when they take time to explain the ways things are done. Then the aspiring administrator has a tutor as well as a model for learning the skills and roles of administrator.

Tim's principal served as role model, mentor, and sponsor. After Tim demonstrated interest and respect, his principal opened up with stories about how schools work. Mary had no clear role model; her principal was supportive but there was no bond of mutual identification. She saw no female role models; in fact, it was hard for her to imagine that administrators could be female. Her university classes were full of aspiring women, however, and she received encouragement and ideas from interactions with them.

Task Learning

Perhaps the strongest learning experiences for assistant principals come when they take on, or are assigned, certain tasks. Teachers may be asked to form committees, to develop criterion-referenced tests, or to coordinate curricula. Department heads have the task of developing a budget for materials; assistant principals

may be assigned the task of coordinating after-school activities. No amount of abstract training or reading substitutes for the intense learning that occurs as a person takes charge of a task.

Task learning forces a person to learn skills and attitudes (e.g., teamwork and risk taking) and gain knowledge of specific needs. At the same time, it provides an opportunity to visualize oneself performing new tasks and then demonstrate to others one's effectiveness. Thus the teacher or assistant principal who takes on the responsibility for performing a particular task (whether it is the school roster, the science fair, the intramural program, the task force on testing, or even patrolling the lavatories) has a learning opportunity, a self-assessment opportunity, and an opportunity to get the attention of superiors.

When task learning is guided by a mentor, the aspiring administrator will have feedback, assistance, and support. Task learning may be facilitated by courses, workshops, and internships that include opportunities for reading, discussing, and reflecting on the theory, research, and practice of administration and leadership.

In many cases, informal task learning is easier for people whose background includes experiences similar to those in the background and thinking of other administrators because mentoring and sponsorship are facilitated by the sort of natural empathy and the desire of administrators to have someone very much like themselves to work with. Sponsors naturally choose to help people who have similar family, religious, social class and social club, gender, and race characteristics and backgrounds. Valverde (1974) has called this the built-in replication formula in sponsorship.

Professional Socialization: The Mix of Formal and Informal Training

In all professions, aspirants must go through prescribed formal university training that provides the theory and skills for a sound knowledge base. For certification, they must seek the official sanction of the state. To be gatekeepers of the profession, they must exhibit the appropriate attitudes and meet the ethical standards of the profession. In many professions, the training is intensive and rigorous, requiring a great deal of

time, sacrifice, and isolation from the real world. As a result, many people are weeded out by the rigor of the training.

The formal training in educational administration is less systematic. Usually, aspiring administrators take courses in their spare time as they continue with their full-time jobs and family responsibilities. There is considerable debate over whether educational administration is really a distinct profession with its own knowledge base, theory, and ethical standards. Politicians and state bureaucrats exercise tremendous control over the training, selection, and monitoring of educational administration professionals. They, more than educators, decide on the knowledge base and skills for the profession.

Assistant principals encounter the formal training structures: State certification requirements direct aspiring administrators to take courses and show evidence of professional development. These aspirants have passed teacher certification requirements and frequently have worked toward master's and even doctoral degrees. Pay incentives and some state laws induce educators to continue course work in universities. Therefore, a great deal of formal training of aspiring administrators is from university courses taught by professors who usually have some experience as practitioners.

State departments of education, state boards, and special commissions usually determine the general goals of administrator certification, guided by the advice and involvement of professors and professional educators' groups such as the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the University Council for Educational Administration, the American Association of School Administrators, and others. (Chapter 4 identifies trends in certification.) States vary in the degree to which they update and monitor the implementation of these goals in certification programs. They also vary in whether or not assistant principals must earn administrator certification before taking an assistant principalship. Waivers are frequently granted when a school district wants to hire an individual who is still earning the credential.

Aspiring administrators may acquire information and training through professional association conferences, workshops, district staff development programs, and state programs like "executive academies" or "professional development seminars."

Aspiration Building and Self-Selection

Adults form and modify their aspirations for careers as they gather feedback from families, peers, and significant others such as professors and superiors. Teachers considering moving into administrative positions search for signals of support and encouragement and take action to show their worth long before they ever actually apply for an administrative position—a sort of aspiration-building and self-selection process. When the signals are positive, they raise their aspirations and start to figure out ways to move from their current positions to new positions that are more central, powerful, responsible, and higher in status and pay. They take risks, associate with new people, burn bridges, estrange themselves from old affiliations, make sacrifices for extra training, and show their worth.

The Formal Selection Process

People who work in organizations can sense a kind of career map, a charting of the paths to follow and the kind of person to be to attain certain positions on that career map. They observe who does and does not get rewarded and see the steps that others have taken to get to desired positions. Such information is seldom charted as a formal career map, but the information becomes folk knowledge—known by everyone, unstated law, a part of the assumptive worlds.

The formal, stated selection process does not delineate such informal maps and folk knowledge. Instead, districts advertise and post position notices listing the functions of the job, the deadline for applications, and minimum and/or desired qualifications. Often the qualifications listed are (a) previous administrative or leadership experience, (b) university course work or degrees, and (c) state certificates.

States, usually in cooperation with universities and professional associations, establish criteria for attaining certification for positions in schools. Thus part of the formal structure of selection for administrative positions is getting the degrees and certification expected and showing evidence, through degrees, courses, and job experience stated as requirements for positions.

References, tests, and interviews. The formal part of the selection process may include a request for references from universities and from practitioners. Most applicants ask for letters from supportive colleagues, community leaders, former bosses, and respected professors. A letter from a high school coach saying that Tim is a good guy may be important for offsetting rumors of a bad temper. Similarly, a letter from his professor detailing Tim's intellectual progress in his curriculum planning course can make a difference. Letters are part of the formal process, but the informal process—phone calls and casual conversation among administrators in touch with the selection process—will be more important than letters.

Applicants are given little information about how the selection process will proceed. In some districts (especially cities), regularized personnel office procedures are spelled out, well known, and followed. More often, applicants depend upon tidbits of information from friends who have some access to the selection committee to find out the procedures, the expectations, the dynamics among the people in control of the process, the top candidates, and the timing of the process.

Infrequently, school districts make use of simulations and testing to assess candidates' skills and values; more often, skills, experience, and values are assessed by a formal interview process, which sometimes includes bringing in school and community representatives to serve on selection committees. Usually the school's principal has a great deal of influence in selecting the assistant. NASSP Assessment Centers, where administrative candidates' skills are evaluated along 12 skills dimensions as they work on activities are, in some districts, applied to the assessment of assistant principals. (Chapter 4 provides details about assessment centers.) A great deal of research and action has centered on ways to improve the process of selection of principals and superintendents, but there has been less attention to assistant principal selection.

In many cases, assistant principal recruitment and selection is left to the site principal with a formal selection process in place to lend legitimacy. In most cases, assistantships are filled by applicants from inside the district; assistant principalships are posted within the district; some districts advertise in statewide professional association newsletters. One seldom sees across-state-line or national advertising for the assistant principalship.

The Informal Assessment Process

The administrator grapevine—conversations, asides, gossip, phone calls within and among districts—serves a key information and referral function in selection. Incumbent administrators hold common assumptions about attitudes, background, and skills for aspiring administrators. They share their assessments of candidates through this grapevine. This grapevine is probably the most powerful assessment and selective structure in the school system. Freed from the fear of legal reprisals that come from putting words on paper, administrators gossip. Their observations, combined with their values and biases, are used by selection committees as they select the top and the successful candidate. This is the "old boys' network."

Decisions are made quickly, as soon as a satisfactory choice is available. People making decisions in organizations often make a limited search for information, choosing the first acceptable solution. There is, therefore, a preference for insiders—previously socialized and tested individuals. This may be especially true in decisions for filling unanticipated assistant principalship vacancies. In a school lacking an assistant principal, crucial daily order and maintenance functions are neglected.

Informal assessments may include indicators of candidates' loyalty, personal background, helpfulness, inteiligence, initiative, willingness to perform essential tasks to maintain the rules and order, and professional knowledge. These are all informal criteria for inclusion in the administrator group. These assessments—coupled with the particular selectors' preference for certain skills and certain types of task learning as well as experience to meet the current needs of the specific school—are often critical deciding factors in selection of administrators.

Informal assessment probably helped Tim George. For example, school board members, having seen him work with children, may have made favorable remarks when inquiring about the selection process. Such remarks could quiet any protest about his slow progress to certification.

In many instances, candidates are labeled "poor on interpersonal relations" on the basis of informal assessments. A phone conversation about Mary Brown's strong stance in the Title IX implementation committee could lead to such labeling. On the

other hand, her university professors could have brought attention to Mary's intellectual abilities if the professors were connected in any way with the network.

Ambiguous and Negotiated Expectations

The assistant principalship consists of poorly defined tasks, ambiguous expectations, and few formal measures for evaluating achievement or task accomplishment. It is difficult to know ways to predict, measure, and select people with high potential for success in the position. Therefore, people may be selected on the basis of informal references, "gut feelings," perceptions that they will "fit in" and fill whatever needs may arise.

Candidates whose opinions and attitudes are congruent with the selectors', who have had opportunities to demonstrate visibly their willingness to pitch in and their loyalty to the particular school site and/or school district, will have more success in this situation. Such candidates may be able to negotiate with selectors if they do not meet particular formal requirements. A candidate who has no administrator certification may convince selectors that semiadministrator experience will suffice as long as the certificate is earned in the near future. Or a candidate may convince selectors to view Little League coaching as equivalent to a requirement for "experience in coordinating and developing curriculum."

Summary

The two case histories and the analysis demonstrate how personal life circumstances, informal interactions in the community, school district activities and needs, staff development, special projects, and special professional interests *interact with* formal course work, certification processes, and district needs and policies for selection and hiring. In this interactive process, assistant principals like Tim and Mary are tapped on the shoulder. They get support, mentoring, access, and the requisite training to go through the formal steps to attain an assistant principalship. One can see too that differences in this interactive process will affect one's

orientation to the role of assistant principal. Different degrees of support, access, task learning, university experiences, and personal life situations affect a person's ease of entry and degree of satisfaction. These, in turn, affect a person's ability to use the assistant principalship as a stepping-stone to a line or staff position in administration.

Clearly, the way assistant principals are trained and selected has important implications for who becomes an assistant principal. It determines what sort of orientation an assistant principal has to educational leadership. It determines how assistant principals carry out major functions like implementing policy, maintaining the school culture, and providing instructional leadership. And it determines whether assistant principals are able to fill the role in a constructive and satisfying way.

The remaining chapters identify and describe new research programs, policies, and structures that affect assistant principals. They offer recommendations and information about possible ways to reconceptualize the assistant principalship and to restructure the role definition, training, selection, and administrative career ladder once we have focused on and recognized the importance of the position in the scheme of school administration.

Note

1. The cases are simulated, but they are based on almost two decades of informal observation, on reviews of literature, and on analyses of administrative careers.

3

Progress in Understanding the Assistant's Role

Surveys of tasks and assessment of job satisfaction do not adequately capture the essence of the assistant principalship. Only by being an assistant or at least following them through their days can we have deeper insight into their roles, functions, feelings, needs, and aspirations. This chapter describes several studies that used a field study or case study approach aimed at uncovering these realities.

The most common understanding of the assistant principalship is the unflattering stereotype of drill sergeant disciplinarian as well as the career ladder assumption that it is a position that functions as the step to higher administration. Most of the studies of assistant principals have been normative studies that surveyed tasks, duties, aspirations, status, selection, effectiveness, and perceptions (Black, 1978; Fulton, 1987; Greenfield, 1985a; Lawson, 1970; Norton & Kreikard, 1987; Pitts, 1974; Preston, 1973). Frequently, these ways of understanding lead to dead ends—to seeing the assistant principal as hatchet man, activity coordinator, handyman, and fire fighter (Reed, 1984).

A more fruitful way of understanding the role of the assistant principal is to examine the functioning of assistant principals

as participants in the complex organization called school. Greenfield (1984), in a comprehensive review of research, calls for studies that explore the dynamics of administering schools and relate tasks performed to matters of context and impact. Such an approach would be more pertinent to questions about school effectiveness and administrator development. He calls for research that asks what assistant principals do but also asks the question in context, asking about the school, the resources, the interaction in the environment. He also calls for research that describes the organizational context within which assistant principals are socialized into administration. This chapter presents findings from such research.

Research on the Work and Work Arrangements

A field study of eight secondary assistant principals in Southern California (Reed & Connors, 1982; Reed & Himmler, 1985) investigated the *nature of the work* and relationship of the work to the high school as an organization. An in-depth picture was provided by 28 hours of observation and interviews. Using a conceptual framework that divided school functions into two categories—stabilizing and transforming—they showed the ways in which the assistant principal's work is primarily focused on organizational maintenance.

Schools establish stability through the curriculum. The assistant principal facilitates this by arranging the master schedule, which regulates the curricular activities. Schools establish stability through the extra curriculum as it springs from and reflects community values. Assistant principals use the extra curriculum as a way of maintaining surveillance over students' conformity with community and school values.

Assistant principals' work is facilitated by their acute senses (attuned to the smell of marijuana, for example) and their "referral system" by which teachers, parents, students, and other administrators tell them when organizational stability is threatened. The study showed the importance of the assistant principal in supporting organizational regularity and in promoting organizational values.

This analysis highlights the ways assistants' work supports community values. Assistants' work is primarily with students; part of their work is being highly visible to students. Their workday is unscheduled; they respond immediately to unpredicted events. They control extracurricular activities and use them as a way to enforce community values through student attitudes. Their work also is critical for implementing state expectations (laws and policies) as they translate state requirements (e.g., minimum curriculum) into everyday regularities (student schedules and the master schedule).

While their main "tools" are the positive aspects of schooling (e.g., activities), assistants spend most of their time with the negative aspects of discipline. Consequently, they may become cynical. Even when not directly intervening, they are patrolling. They offer support (e.g., pleasant conversations inquiring about a student's hobby, encouraging a student to run for student body office). They remediate when there are disruptions in the organization's regularities.

The researchers found that disruptions are classified. Disruptions may be minor (a kiss on campus)—passing events where there are few rules and values are not seriously challenged. "Not very serious disruptions" (e.g., tardiness, truancy, inappropriate dress) do disrupt order and are covered by rules. "Serious disruptions" (forgery, defiance of authority, gambling, fighting, threatening a teacher) are covered by rules and are threats to school values. "Very serious disruptions" occur rarely and are not covered by rules. They threaten the school and community values of students and adults. "Streaking" is an example.

Assistants' sanctions range from "extra work" to parent conferences to expulsion. Assistants see themselves as projecting images ranging from policeman and "mother superior" to "father confessor" and helper. Their decisions about which sanction to use and which image to project depend upon (a) the type of disruption, (b) the student's reputation, (c) the context, and (d) the load on the system. The assistant principal uses rituals that enable misconduct to be addressed and remediated in a way that maintains stability.

This study, by exploring assistant principal work *in the organizational context of the school,* identifies the crucial functions

performed, not just the tasks, as they relate to overall school functioning. Such studies hold promise for increased appreciation of the complexity and work performed in the assistant principal role.

Research on the Socialization of the Assistant Principal

Another research project, (Marshall, 1985a; Gross, 1987; Mitchell, 1987; Scott, 1989), through case studies of 20 assistant principals, examined the organizational processes that affect assistant principals as they are socialized to be effective and comfortable in school administration.

An early analysis (Marshall, 1985a) described the "professional shock" encountered by these entry-level administrators. Their early tasks were to develop the ability and willingness to find the culturally appropriate response to these shocks. Performance in these tasks affected (a) whether they were seen as competent and (b) whether they could be comfortable and remain and/or move up in their administrative careers.

The first task was deciding to leave teachers and teaching behind. This entails tremendous self-analysis, combined with strong signals from the organization indicating that opportunities are available. For example, some were motivated by anger about the status quo, inspired to become a leader to change things; others were groomed and sponsored by incumbent administrators.

The second task was analyzing the selection process not only for their entry but for upward mobility in the career. Each new assistant takes careful note of the qualities, skills, functions filled and personal characteristics, backgrounds, and styles of the persons selected for the career. Sometimes this yields shocking information. For example, one woman realized that she remained an assistant under a succession of new principals, in each case teaching the novice principals the ropes. Finally, she was told (after her sponsor retired and affirmative action pressures subsided) that she was seen as the "principal-maker." In contrast, another woman assistant's analysis of the selection process made her conclude that she projected the right image and was favorably placed for upward mobility as

long as she continued exhibiting the right behaviors, attitudes, and image.

Maintaining a calm front in the face of culture shock was the third task. New assistants are shocked at how unprepared they are for the array of tasks they confront. They are shocked at seeing things that seem unprofessional, unfair, and wrong. One said "I was shocked at the underhanded things done on the job—manipulation, violation of confidence" (Marshall, 1985a, p. 39). Another was shocked to realize that "they clearly wanted a white man" (p. 39). Another was shocked at seeing strategies devised to solve problems even if the strategies damaged the instructional program. But they had to maintain a calm front in spite of the confusion and stress they felt.

The fourth task was defining relationships with teachers. Taking the administrator's perspective, the new assistant suddenly is supervising and evaluating teachers—who sometimes are friends and former allies. Now suddenly the job includes judging and "shaping up" those who are viewed as incompetent or lazy; to do that job, they must create a new superordinate-subordinate relationship with teachers.

The fifth task was learning the art of the street-level bureaucrat. When faced with the need to implement policies and meet pressing needs with chronically scarce resources, street-level bureaucrats learn how to remake policy. They modify goals, ration services, convince students, parents, and teachers that they can wait for services, and "fudge" on reports. When there are never enough good, qualified substitutes, they carefully find ways to circumvent procedures so they get the best ones. When a districtwide homework policy must be monitored, assistants learn to use that monitoring to fill more pressing teacher evaluation needs.

The sixth task entailed identifying, demanding, and protecting one's areas of responsibility or "territory." Certain responsibilities (e.g., discipline, rosters, the older students, parent conferences) become known in the district or the site as critical, visible, and tough assignments. Even with written job descriptions, assistants could lose their territory to a competing assistant or to myriad other new tasks assigned, so the assistants also have the task of asserting their command over their territory and maintaining their control.

The last task involved discipline management. Assistants must adopt a mode that copes diplomatically with the realities they see. Such realities are (a) teachers having a bad day and taking it out on a kid, (b) the need to "learn the art of bluffing" (Marshall, 1985a, p. 50), (c) the need to individualize discipline (e.g., calming down the emotionally disturbed child rather than using forceful discipline, and (d) creating preventive systems (e.g., frequent touring and chats to sense tensions, creating a stable of good substitutes to avoid disruptions).

As they encounter these tasks, assistants are socialized to fit into the administrative culture. They create their own interpretations of policy to fit school needs and develop related political skills for presenting explanations of their school's needs and strengths to parents, teachers, students, and people in high district office positions. The analysis shows new assistant principals defining relationships with teachers in terms of "us versus them"; it evidences the difficulties women have in asserting their territory for managing discipline and demonstrates the array of enculturation tasks they encounter—above and beyond the obvious tasks of buses and rosters.

In addition, the research uncovered the coping mechanisms of assistant principals who are plateaued and who are working under principals whom they do not respect. It showed them coping with their own questioning of the very structure of schooling. It showed them making choices between the buying into and molding of themselves to fit into the administrative culture and preparing to move up or considering whether to defy the culture or even consider leaving the profession.

More intensive analysis of the same research led to the delineation of assistant principals' assumptive worlds (see Marshall & Mitchell, 1991) and the typology of orientation to the career (Marshall, Mitchell, & Gross, 1990).

Constraints on Behavior and Values: Assumptive Worlds

Using the same case studies of assistants but a new perspective of micropolitics, Marshall and Mitchell (1991) identified "assumptive worlds" of assistant principals. These unstated

rules are understandings about limits on their roles and their expression of values. A fledgling administrator might be forgiven initial naïveté, but continuously ignoring those assumptive worlds would be seen by the principal and other gatekeepers as clear evidence that the violator does not merit membership in the professional culture. This section discusses the findings on assumptive worlds.

All professions have informal, unstated rules about what one should believe and how one should speak and act. "The culture of a profession consists of its values, norms and symbols" (Greenwood [1957] in Volmer & Mills, 1966, p. 16), and norms guide behavior by delineating an elaborate system of role definitions. Individuals (like assistant principals) just entering a profession are acutely sensitive to those rules; they often learn the rules only when they see a cold stare or a direct reprimand when they violate a rule (Bosk, 1979; Schein, 1978).

The following description identifies the rules and their implications.

Right and Responsibility to Initiate

Assumptive worlds of site administrators include understandings about who takes initiative and exercises discretion. Traditionally, the principal, a district middle manager, must implement district policy, having had little input into that policy (although this tradition is challenged by restructuring and site-based management reforms). The principal exercises discretion when assigning duties to the assistant; the duties may leave little opportunity for initiative and risk. Still, some assistants want to try out new ideas and gain visibility, but the rules of assumptive worlds limit that behavior.

Rule 1: Limit risk taking. Risks undertaken by assistant principals must be projects that improve the school without causing major changes or inviting strong opposition. Developing a curriculum to cope with a crisis—like the unresolved emotions from a student suicide—is one such example. One assistant developed a school newsletter and a new and popular procedure for managing suspensions; such safe projects were particularly important because that assistant often had conflicts with his

principal over important substantive issues like the importance of academics compared with student activities.

Rule 2: Remake policy quietly. Site administrators can and often need to overlook, evade, or loosely interpret policies that do not work well for their school. (Karl Weick, 1982, notes that school systems are "loosely coupled," so looseness of monitoring and direct communication allow such flexibility.) Assistants find it necessary to ignore quietly or even defy the demands of the district or their principals in some situations.

In one instance, an assistant principal skirted around strict compliance with Public Law 94-142 rather than leave disabled students with an incompetent substitute. Another, faced with the need to placate a teacher with an ill-furnished room in the basement and bureaucratic rules about furnishings, tapped into her own network to get furniture delivered.

Such is the work of the "street-level bureaucrats" (Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977), who, when faced with chronically scarce resources and pressings demands, remake policy. Assistant principals learn to do this quietly.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Values

Assistant principals learn that there are understandings about which values are the "right" values in their district and their school sites. Their talk and their behavior must demonstrate adherence to these values.

Rule 1: Avoid moral dilemmas. Open and public displays of the tough issues must be avoided in administrators' assumptive worlds. For example, one junior high assistant had spent a lot of time counseling a boy, which resulted in tremendous improvement in his behavior and academic work. When a security guard provoked an altercation and reported the boy at fault, this assistant was tempted to make it a public issue. However, she understood the rules of the assumptive worlds and knew that she would jeopardize her promotion. She found a way to transfer the boy and kept the dilemma private.

Rule 2: Do not display divergent values. The assistant who is at odds with teachers, other administrators, and "the power structure" must avoid display of these conflicts. One inner-city high school assistant talked privately about his observation that "power and money don't give a damn" and "America is not going to support inner-city schools" (Marshall, 1985b, p. 132). However, as he let those opinions show, he displayed his defiance of the dominant values.

Patterns of Expected Behavior

Often assistants find out about assumptive worlds' rules of behavior when they violate them.

Rule 1: Commitment is required. In the midst of a personal conflict raging among the superintendent, the athletic director, board members, and faculty factions, one assistant decided to remain aloof and uninvolved. He even declined the superintendents' offer to sponsor him in a social club. Not recognizing this as a call for commitment and loyalty, the assistant lost the opportunity for superintendent sponsorship.

Rule 2: Don't get labeled as a troublemaker. One upwardly mobile female assistant principal was ready to challenge her district's examination for principalships and demonstrate that the model answers were wrong. Fellow administrators told her to withdraw her challenge, even if she were right, because the "troublemaker" label would ruin her career.

Rule 3: Keep disputes private. The junior high assistant who squealed learned an assumptive worlds lesson. She felt justified in demanding special repairs and maintenance for her "special school" but, by provoking a dispute with the district engineer, she only got a lecture on following bureaucratic rules. If the dispute had stayed private and low key, she might have received more help.

Rule 4: Cover all your bases. Assistants (especially those in vulnerable positions) must learn to cover every task and expectation held for them. The black woman assistant (the only black

administrator in a predominantly white, desegregated school) was particularly vulnerable. She was assigned semiclerical duties and was responsible for one third of the teacher observations. But she saw a tremendous need to spend time counseling and dealing with racial tension. Rather than earning her credits, this work pulled her away from her assigned duties, leading to a label of "inefficient."

School-Site Conditions Affecting Political Relationships

Each school site, even those in the same district, has specific turf and trust relationships that are part of its assumptive worlds.

Rule 1: Build administrator team trust. The assistant with a partnership of trust, particularly with the principal, will receive support and commendations. One assistant, in a continuous intellectual and philosophical conflict with his principal, received not support but contempt. Even though the principal, teachers, and students relied on him and his work, this conflict undermined many of his efforts.

Rule 2: Align your turf. Site administrators understand that some tasks and projects are prized; some are considered "the pits." Discipline and repairs management may be undesirable in one school but prized and essential tasks in another. The assumptive worlds lesson is this: Be sure to jockey into position to take charge of some of the prized tasks.

Implications of Assumptive Worlds

Detailing the assistants' assumptive worlds provides insight into the constraints within which they work. They are not to take initiative unless it is very likely to succeed. They are not to speak up about inappropriate policy—just remake it quietly. When they are upset about some of the fundamental problems of schooling, they are to avoid any display of those dilemmas. There are dominant prevailing values that are *the* ones to display. Displays of loyalty, avoidance of trouble,

smoothing over disputes, and covering the clearly stated job description are more important than grappling with the tough issues of schooling. And the particularities of the site—whether or not they can build trust with their principal, whether or not they can get some control over their task assignments—become key factors in assistant principals' satisfaction and success.

We are left with a picture of the assistant principal—the person entering the profession and learning how to be an administrator, the person who will be looked to for future school leadership—as a person learning to comply with dominant values, keeping quiet about fundamental problems, and taking few initiatives and no risks.

Orientations to the Position

The same set of case studies was the basis for an analysis using career socialization perspectives, focusing on how assistants settle on an orientation to the career (Marshall, Mitchell, & Gross, in press). Categories of orientation to the assistant principalship were identified from the case studies to assist in understanding the career process. These categories are as follows:

The upwardly mobile assistant principal. This person has developed a highly useful and active network of colleagues in professional organizations. This individual values loyalty to superiors and demonstrates a willingness to take risks. A "sponsor" has influence in assisting career goals.

The career assistant principal. This person does not wish to be principal but has created a pleasant working environment with preferred task assignments, good relations with higher administrators, and enough authority to view his or her position with pride.

The plateaued assistant principal. This individual would like a promotion to principal but has applied several times and been rebuffed. No opportunity has really existed for his or her advancement; such a person often lacks mentor assistance and the skills necessary for good human relations.

The "shafted" assistant principal. This aspirant has fulfilled criteria for the upwardly mobile but remains without a chance of promotion. This person is plateaued and has lost a sponsor's help. Such a person may have lost out because of (a) inappropriate placement or (b) district changes.

The assistant principal who considers leaving. This assistant principal is young enough to develop an alternative career and may have other skills enabling him or her to change professions, to earn more money. The candidate may have been in a management position outside of education.

The downwardly mobile administrator. Research showed a reverse career trend for some assistant principals from principal to assistant principal or to teacher or principal of an elementary school. These reversals could be involuntary, with reduction in administrative staff due to budget or demotion due to a political mistake. Voluntary reversals in position were requested by principals with health problems or those who wished to return to a job with tasks they preferred.

Details from the Case Studies

The above six categories were developed from intensive case studies of 20 assistants. Themes in their careers are detailed below to show the career stories from which these categories emerged.[1]

Perception of mobility. Most assistant principals perceived the position to be a transitional one in which to learn skills and prove oneself on first entering the job. Doris Schroeder, Martin Jameson, Ellen Carson, and Susan Rafferty are some of our examples of people who had clear visions of where they wanted to move in the future, and each set up a plan for systematically demonstrating as many skills as possible in school administration.

For example, Doris Schroeder taught high school in a district that was cutting back on personnel and closing schools. As president of the teacher's organization of her district, she was asked by her superintendent to head a task force on reorganization of the district school curriculum and personnel. As a

result of her recommendations, the district replaced a junior high school with a middle school and opened up two assistant principalships. Doris applied for one of the assistant principal positions and received the job, having received some help from a woman who was then deputy superintendent. However, when the district leadership changed and Mrs. Schroeder applied for an elementary principal position, she did not receive it. She expected eventually to become a principal or assistant superintendent in her district or a nearby district.

Joan Dixon was coached by an assistant superintendent to apply and prepare for a districtwide supervisory position after teaching for seven years. She grasped this opportunity and later sought an assistant principal position with the advice of her mentor. She took on as many tasks as she could, even chairing district committees during a sabbatical year.

Martin Jameson planned to spend three years in teaching and then move up to administration. He followed his plan. He became an assistant principal and then sought a promotion to the principalship. He had a clear understanding of the local politics of his district and also applied in other districts. When he did not get the principalship of his high school or middle school, he accepted a principal-superintendent position in another small district. Then, three years later, he moved to a larger district as superintendent.

Ellen Carson took on any new task before her. She took the examination for the high school and middle school principalship after only two years as an assistant principal and was promoted to the principalship of a disciplinary school.

William Russell, an assistant principal for 13 years and in charge of his high school's annex, said, "There is nothing more I can learn in the position. Now I am afraid I'm stuck." Although he was on his district's principal list, he did not apply when the opportunity was there.

Passing the loyalty test. Assistant principals often face moral and ethical choices that demand decisions that will affect their careers. Failure to observe loyalty norms constitutes a social error (Bosk, 1979), which may disqualify an assistant principal for upward mobility. Loyalty errors include failure to support the boss, defiance of district orders, or publicly questioning superiors.

Elizabeth Anderson openly defied her principal on a variety of issues and could be heard in the outer office arguing with him. David Greenberg openly criticized his superintendent over a salary issue and was told by an Administrators' Association member to retract his comments. Katherine Rhoads challenged her district's test answers after failing a principal-level examination. She was advised not to persist if she wanted a promotion. She then dropped the challenge.

Martin Jameson's Whitman School District was rife with conflict. He lost his chance to become principal of his high school by ignoring the superintendent's request that he join a certain service club. When the high school principal was demoted to a middle school position, Martin was a favored candidate of teachers and community. He declined the superintendent's club. Martin did not receive the principal position and applied elsewhere. He was offered (and accepted) a position as principal/superintendent in another district.

Sponsorship. Research shows that administrative careers develop in a sponsored mobility system (Marshall, 1979; Ortiz, 1982; Turner, 1960; Valverde, 1980). Sponsorship offers informal support, training, and an affective bond that assures the protégé the visibility, advice, and career direction needed to build a successful administrative career. Several case studies show how sponsorship can influence career outcomes.

When Joan Dixon was a teacher, an assistant superintendent advised her to take courses in preparation for an administrative career. With his advice, she moved into a language arts advisory position for a year and later into a high school vice principalship. She was aware of the importance of this sponsorship and developed a network of potential sponsors.

David Greenberg at Robert Frost High School had applied for a principalship and been passed over on several occasions. He was often vocal about expressing his discouragement with the selection process and with some of the administrators he had observed. David's principal, Dr. Fergusson, recognized his value as an assistant principal with good ideas that he knew how to implement into programs. He perceived that David handled discipline well, was fair, and that students liked him. However, many teachers felt he lacked interpersonal skills. He

was unable to gain an active sponsor, as it appeared that he did not actively support the values of raising student "self-image" in a troubled urban school district.

Ellen Carson worked in the same district. As a new assistant principal at Longfellow High School, a model academic school, she took on tasks with enthusiasm and demonstrated her ability to accomplish her principal's goals. She risked initiating new record-keeping policies, which, although unpopular with teachers, were improved systems for records on students. She was available to listen to teachers' concerns and to provide resources. Ellen Carson also was highly visible in professional associations. Ms. Carson and her principal, Dr. Perkins, developed a trusting relationship almost immediately. Dr. Perkins had assumed his position as principal only two months before Ms. Carson was assigned to Longfellow. He found the other vice principal uncooperative, also having been a candidate for Dr. Perkins's position. Thus he relied on Ellen's skills. Dr. Perkins gave Ellen a glowing personnel report when she left Longfellow High.

Each principal relied heavily on the talents of these two urban assistant principals, yet the responses of Dr. Fergusson and Dr. Perkins to the assistants' career aspirations were entirely different. Both principals praised the work of their assistants; however, Dr. Perkins acted as a sponsor and mentor for Ms. Carson, while Dr. Fergusson did not act as a mentor for Mr. Greenberg. Dr. Perkins openly supported Ellen Carson in public, encouraging her to try for a principalship in spite of her short term as a vice principal.

The absence of sponsorship can have a negative effect on one's orientation to the career. George Tiempo was the only Hispanic administrator in his small city district and had been responsible for obtaining federal grants and instituting bilingual programs in his district. Although he had a doctorate and felt overqualified as an assistant principal, his principal supported another candidate in the school for the principalship. Tiempo then applied for another vacant principal position but was unsuccessful. He had no apparent support from any sponsors during the observation. His aspirations were so frustrated in his district that he considered leaving education, as he also had another successful career as a financial consultant.

Settling into the assistant principalship. Those assistant principals who were comfortable in the assistant principal position admitted two things: They made conscious decisions to put their family first and to reject the time commitment incurred by the principalship. Rejection of the principal role also meant they were not interested in its inherently political nature.

Ralph Long found the assistant principal position contained responsibilities exactly suited for his talents and preferences. After returning to the United States from a prestigious education position abroad, he held several administrative posts with little satisfaction. The assistant principal position at Devon High School, he perceived, "was ideally suited to me because it had to do primarily with curriculum and not discipline." He became the highly respected instructional leader of the high school and only recently retired from this position.

Andrea Gibson defined herself as a career person, wanted time for her family, liked the way the job fit her personality, and rejected the pressures and time demands of the principalship.

A striking finding was that a large percentage of the men (43%) elected to remain in the assistant principal position and that only 1 of the 13 women (8%) selected that position as her final career goal. We believe this is skewed from the general assistant principal population because the subjects were not randomly selected. Among the women who entered the administrative career in line positions, 4 aspired to move to central office staff positions away from line positions, but none of the men expressed any desire to take this career direction. In fact, George Tiempo, once in a bilingual staff position, moved to an assistant principal position to be better placed for a move to the principalship.

Gender as a factor. Many of the woman assistant principals in the study observed differences in treatment at schools from that given their male counterparts. Jean King and Carole Mann were told outright by superintendents that women were not considered for principal positions in their districts. Jean King then moved to another district, where she became a high school principal after two years. Carole Mann outlasted her superintendent and became a principal after devoting 36 years to education. Alexis Clark was told by one of her principals, "I would never respect a woman as a leader."

Elaine Jones, a black female appointed to a white male administrative team, was not invited to the informal team as a colleague. Susan Rafferty had a sponsor but felt that she experienced more testing from faculty because she was female and young. Both Ellen Carson and Doris Schroeder related stories of male colleagues attempting to undermine their authority as assistant principals and of male teachers who appeared unwilling to take direction from them as women.

Implications

Assistant principals develop orientations in response to the opportunities and task activities they experience during their time in the position. Upward mobility requires commitment to one's career and to the organization. In the assistant principalship, the individual has an opportunity to demonstrate commitment as well as positive skills and attitudes for the district.

The principal is an "insider" who has major control over the promotion process. Principals provide the resources for training experiences in the school as well as access to information sources and opportunities for visibility (Mitchell, 1987; Valverde, 1980). The relationship of the teacher-aspirant and the assistant principal to the principal is vitally important in the socialization process and in gaining the principal's support and sponsorship.

Career timing and planning, and the ability to define situations in which one can successfully take limited risks, are also major factors that promote or inhibit mobility. When positive factors are in harmony (opportunity for promotion exists, the candidate has respected sponsorship)—along with the candidate's desire for promotion—this model predicts that the assistant principal aspirant should be upwardly mobile.

However, this research showed that not every assistant principal wants to move up the ladder or will receive the opportunity. In the case studies examined, it was evident that not all assistant principals had received the acceptance of the organization and authority of position that Ralph Long enjoyed. Those who are up against an organization that plateaus or "shafts" the aspirant feel tremendous frustration.

Analysis of the context in the case studies shows that each district and each school organization has its own norms and

traditions. Each person developed a response behavior to a particular district.

The school culture imposes an uneven set of conditions, restraints, and even possibilities on each assistant principal. The working environment has a profound effect on the attitudes and aspirations of assistant principals.

Summary of the New Research

Such research holds promise for describing the importance of assistant principals' functions. It also identifies the fundamental dilemmas of school systems. One way to examine how administrators cope is by watching and listening to assistant principals as they work with school systems, as they face these dilemmas, and as they question this system. Assistant principals, at the entry of administrative careers, are learning coping mechanisms as they are molded and socialized by the traditions, values, and work of administration. These are strong and complex forces socializing the individual into the culture of the profession of administration. They will not be changed by quick-fix alterations. Changes in the role will not work unless they accommodate such complexity.

Note

1. Names used in case studies are pseudonyms assigned to protect anonymity.

4

Opportunities for Improving the Assistant Principalship

Two assistant principals, taking a coffee break, were grousing about how no one pays attention to what they do. One said, "What would happen if some wise and powerful people got together for a day for the purpose of improving our lot?" His friend said, "That'll be the day!"

Actually, opportunities exist and some policy, training, and reform efforts have been made to improve the lot of assistant principals. This chapter examines the status of current structures, programs, and policies that are areas of opportunity for improving the assistant principalship.

It points out specific and chronic problem areas and specific programs and policies. The chapter sets the stage for action to improve the assistant principalship and thus to improve schools.

Training and Certification Policies

State Certification Policies

The certification policies for all states are documented in a volume compiled by Burks (1989). Educators can get up-to-date

information about their state from their professional association and their state department of education. Most states, in fact, do not have separate, specific certification requirements for assistant principals. Therefore, assistant principals are seen by the states to be something between teacher and administrator. Districts may or may not require that they have administrator certification.

An analysis of requirements across the states reveals quite interesting patterns in regard to the attention and intentions of state policymakers. Few states even specifically mention the assistant or vice principal in the listing of positions covered by administrative certification or have specific certification for them. Analysis of the requirements for entry into administration among the 50 states reveals a general policy of requiring a valid teaching certificate along with teaching experience and a master's degree in administration (or in another area but with educational administration courses) for administrative certification. Some require *all* of these prerequisites; some require only the teaching certificate; most states require teaching experience, some requiring at least three years. About half of the states require graduate training (ranging from 6 to 33 hours) in educational administration. States often grant the administrative certificate for a certain number of years, ranging from 3 to 10, so it must be renewed. Renewal requirements may include taking courses and workshops as well as approval by the local superintendent.

States may or may not have agreements of reciprocity with other states. Administrators who seek out-of-state positions may face hurdles of taking courses and adhering to a different state's certification policies even if they have attained certification in another state. Clearly, state certification policies regarding assistant principals have not addressed the issue of specific training or requirements for the position. Thus school districts, professional associations, and universities are provided the freedom and the responsibility for creating the training and the standards for the assistant principalship. Some states, in their recent efforts to improve education through state policy, are currently proposing changes in administrator certification requirements.

There is an opportunity for altering and improving the assistant principalship by changing state certification policies—by requiring, for example, that certification be renewed periodically, by requiring that university programs offer courses in

supervision of staff development, supervision of instruction, equity policy, and by reciprocity agreements so that administrators can more easily move across state lines. Chapter 5 includes discussion of possible changes in certification.

University and Professional Training

Few opportunities exist for assistant principals to get formal training for the position. Most learning occurs on the job, although the assistant principal can take general administration courses. In rare instances, assistant principals may have a chance to participate in a workshop or a professional conference that addresses their concerns and provides skill-building experiences.

To what extent do these formal and informal training experiences help assistant principals anticipate the administrative roles, make appropriate career decisions, manage the tasks, and create an array of coping strategies for managing the dilemmas of the assistant principalship in constructive ways? Do these experiences help them manage professional and bureaucratic conflicts? Do they build a sense of administrative professionalism? Do they provide rewards for the administrator who values instructional leadership, equity, and the use of research and theory to improve practice? There are few answers, but two surveys provide some leads.

R. A. Gorton (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, personal communication, 1985) surveyed all university educational administration programs belonging to the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) in 1984, asking whether they provided courses specifically for the assistant principalship. He found that none offered separate courses for the assistant principalship, and most did not offer units of study on topics of importance to prospective assistant principals. Gorton concluded that his respondents had put little thought into the assistant principalship. They felt that courses for principals would be adequate for assistants.

Another 1984 survey provides data. (Marshall, 1984, surveyed a small sample of 42 respondents of NASSP assistant principal members in the 50 states.) Only 29% of the respondents knew of any program or policy that aimed to improve the assistant principalship. The respondents' suggestions for improving training

were primarily focused on preparing them for the problems site administrators faced on a day-to-day basis, such as

(1) managing community relations,
(2) discipline management,
(3) staff evaluation,
(4) program evaluation,
(5) instructional management,
(6) legal issues,
(7) handling emergencies,
(8) drug education,
(9) computers,
(10) facilities and fiscal management,
(11) bus scheduling,
(12) fund-raising, and
(13) extracurricular supervision.

Many of these very specific tasks are shared between and among site administrators. To address the assistants' specific task-oriented training, discipline management was the most often mentioned need, with some emphasis on the need for positive approaches to discipline. Few made comments about the skills and attitudes needed for assistants to cope in a vulnerable, ambiguous position in which one must carefully work within the assumptive worlds (as described in Chapter 3) and shape one's orientation to the career (as described in Chapters 2 and 3). Several respondents identified the importance of the principal in taking leadership to facilitate the assistant principal's development; several mentioned the need for ways to cope with "burnout" and with the reality of low incentive, no rewards, and lack of opportunity for moving out of the position, no matter how well one performs.

Selection Policies

Two decades ago, writing about administrator selection, McIntyre (1966, p. 10) said "the challenge is one of finding or creating the situations that are really job-relevant and then

recording and analyzing the candidate's behavior." He spoke of the problems of administrator selection, showing how the "trait approach" ignored the situational aspects of administration, how interviewing is judgmental, and how relying on letters of recommendation, transcripts, and rating scales is like reading tea leaves.

Then Bridges and Baehr (1971) raised questions about the common use of administrator certification as the main selection criterion. They noted that the low participation of minorities in administrator certification programs would raise serious questions about the fairness of using certification as a criterion. More important, they challenged the very assumption that formal training will lead to greater effectiveness, showing research that indicated that traditional graduate courses may *lessen* administrator flexibility and that courses on the content of administration were unrelated to administrative success.

Since those challenges and cries of alarm were issued, there have been several innovations in selection processes, and attention has been given to avoiding using formal practices that unfairly discriminate. In addition, some selection processes include assessments for predicting candidates' future behavior as it relates to the job.

Assessment Centers

McIntyre (1966), noting that the armed forces have sociometrics (peer ratings) and situational performance tests to select leaders, suggested that education should add such procedures to selection. Assessment centers, developed originally for use in industry, are now used for selection of school administrators, including assistant principals. Assessors identify individuals for entry or advancement into management, evaluating candidates on key dimensions such as leadership, decision making, oral and written ability, problem solving, and organizing ability. Candidates are measured as they participate in activities that simulate those in administrative jobs as well as by the traditional measurements of interviewing and testing.

Following this tradition developed in private industry, the NASSP has developed the NASSP Assessment Centers as devices for evaluating and making selection and promotion decisions for

educational administration positions (Jeswald, 1977). The first assessment centers evaluated behavior dimensions through simulations (such as "in-basket" exercises and analysis of a case study, observed by assessors) and a semistructured personal interview.

Districts can use this service for staff development and for assistance in decision making on administrative personnel. The centers can provide data on an individual's ability in the areas that were found to be important for assistant principal and principal performance. Table 4.1 outlines the skills areas that can be assessed.

At the end of the assessment process, the individual and the school district are given a "Final Assessment Report," which identifies areas of strength, areas for improvement, suggestions for improvement and growth, and an overall performance rating.

More than 50 assessment centers have been located throughout the country and have been evaluated and refined (Milstein & Fiedler, 1988).[1] In the assessment center process, nonwhites do less well than whites, men do slightly less well than women, and individuals serving in nonteaching roles (counselors or education specialists) perform better than their teaching colleagues (Schmitt, Noe, Meritt, Fitzgerald, & Jorgensen, 1984). Dade County, Florida, created its own management assessment center and reported that people who scored well in assessment also performed well on the job. They found their assessment center to be better at predicting administrator success than the interview process (Gomez, 1985), and assessment centers are a very popular innovative (Allison & Allison, 1989).

The assessment center concept continues to be refined and is used increasingly for staff development and training as well as for selection. Assessment centers are functioning in 35 states as well as in Canada and Germany.

Tests

To assess potential for administration, tests can be useful. Georgia's test has been integrated as part of state certification requirements. Georgia's example provides insights and raises questions about testing administrators. A Teacher Certification Test in Administration and Supervision is required of educators

TABLE 4.1 NASSP Assessment Center Skills

	Skills To Be Assessed
1. Problem analysis	Ability to seek out relevant data and analyze complex information to determine the important elements of a problem situation; searching for information with a purpose.
2. Judgment	Ability to reach logical conclusions and make high-quality decisions based on available information; skill in identifying educational needs and setting priorities; ability to evaluate critically written communications.
3. Organizational ability	Ability to plan, schedule, and control the work of others; skill in using resources in an optimal fashion; ability to deal with a volume of paperwork and heavy demands on one's time.
4. Decisiveness	Ability to recognize when a decision is required (disregarding the quality of the decision) and to act quickly.
5. Leadership	Ability to get others involved in solving problems; ability to recognize when a group requires direction, to interact with a group effectively, and to guide it to the accomplishment of a task.
6. Sensitivity	Ability to perceive the needs, concerns, and personal problems of others; skill in resolving conflicts; tact in dealing with persons from different backgrounds; ability to deal effectively with people concerning emotional issues; knowing what information to communicate and to whom.
7. Stress tolerance	Ability to perform under pressure and during opposition; ability to think on one's feet.
8. Oral communication	Ability to make a clear oral presentation of facts or ideas.
9. Written communication	Ability to express ideas clearly in writing; to write appropriately for different audiences—students, teachers, parents, and so on.
10. Range of interest	Competence to discuss a variety of subjects—educational, political, current events, economic, and so on; desire to participate actively in events.
11. Personal motivation	Need to achieve in all activities attempted; evidence that work is important to personal satisfaction; ability to be self-policing.
12. Educational values	Possession of a well reasoned educational philosophy; receptiveness to new ideas and change.

seeking initial certification in administration (Schnittjer & Flippo, 1984). Developed by committees of administrators and consultants, the test was constructed from topics that covered the content knowledge and skills deemed necessary for entry-level administrators and supervisors. Objectives were then developed for each topic (117 objectives covering seven content areas), and from these objectives a job-analysis survey and a field test emerged.

The test content included (a) an overview of leadership in education (e.g., delegation of authority, implementing changes, ethics of school administration); (b) organizational and legal structure in education (e.g., landmark cases, structure and governance of local school systems); (c) management of school operations (e.g., transportation, space utilization); (d) personnel management (e.g., student records, staff evaluation); (e) instructional supervision (e.g., basic teaching models, teaching/learning resources); (f) curriculum development (e.g., evaluation of curriculum); and (g) social issues in school administration (e.g., student rights, public relations). Sample objectives and sample test items are shown below in Table 4.2.

In Georgia, test takers between 1978 and 1983 passed at the rate of 68%, and test retakers passed at the rate of 81%. Females consistently had a higher pass rate than males. Blacks had a low pass rate compared with whites. Applicants who had courses in administration and supervision had higher pass rates than those who had no such courses (Schnittjer & Flippo, 1984). Testing is controversial and subject to court challenges when it differentially affects minorities.[2]

Identifying Competencies

Although emphasizing the principalship, the work of Florida's Council on Educational Management has implications for assistant principalships. Their research identified "basic" and "high-performing" competencies of principals (Croghan, 1985). Table 4.3 lists the competencies. The council developed performance-based certifications, with three levels of achievement.

Level One is a written test of knowledge in domains of communication, curriculum, financing, instructional technology, law, leadership, management, and personnel. Level Two requirements

TABLE 4.2 Sample Items from Georgia's Certification Test

Sample Objectives for This Test:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the structure and governance of local school systems.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of school safety regulations.
3. Select the appropriate approach for evaluating instructional outcomes in a given situation.
4. Identify strategies and techniques for solving problems related to school/community relations.

Sample Test Items Matched to Objective 2:

Which playschool activity is most likely to be prohibited in elementary schools because it presents a potential danger to students?

A. Kickball
B. Flag football
C. Jogging
D. Roller skating

(Note: Roller skating is most likely to be prohibited because it is most dangerous. D is correct.)

Sample Test Item Matched to Objective 3:

What type of test is designed to assess the student's ability to understand concepts and to present them clearly and logically?

A. True/False Questions
B. Essay Test
C. Observational Checklist
D. Work Samples

(Note: Essay tests are designed to test a student's ability to present complex ideas in an organized, logical manner. B is correct.)

SOURCE: Georgia State Department of Education (1983).

include one year of successful full-time experience as a principal or an intern principal, assistant principal, or interim principal as well as competency-based training (Croghan, 1985) and favorable assessment by the appraisal system. Attaining Level Three requires experienced principals to demonstrate superior school results. Districts develop their own systems for performance appraisal, for training new principals, and for selection with state-level oversight. The Florida Council, recognizing the connection between the assistant principalship and the pool of potential educational leaders, has incorporated assistants in its purview. The Florida Academy for School Leaders conducts and sponsors training institutes, supplementing that provided by districts', regional systems', and universities' programs (Florida Council on Educational Management, 1988).

TABLE 4.3 The Proposed High Performing and Basic Competencies

Cluster	*High-Performing Competencies*	*Basic Competencies*
Purpose and direction	1. Proactive orientation 2. Decisiveness	3. Commitment to school mission
Cognitive skills	4. Interpersonal search 5. Information search 6. Concept formation 7. Conceptual flexibility	
Consensus management	8. Managing interaction 9. Persuasiveness	10. Concern for image 11. Tactical adaptability
Quality enhancement	12. Achievement motivation 13. Management control	14. Developmental orientation
Organization	15. Organizational ability	16. Delegation
Communication	17. Self-presentation	18. Written communication 19. Organizational sensitivity

SOURCE: Croghan (1985, p. 6a).

Thus we see that attempts at defining tasks and skills and formalizing the selection process are signals of progress toward elimination of reliance on word of mouth and the "old boys'" network and toward making selection closely tied to job functions. However, they have not provided answers or processes for the puzzle and the dilemma of the low representation of women and minorities in school administration. Organizational and societal factors continue to function as obstructions to these underrepresented groups. In addition, these new processes rely on traditional definitions of appropriate administrator roles and skills. They do nothing to raise questions about whether administrator role definition and tasks *ought* to be continued as status quo. They do nothing to address the fact that assistant principals cope with fundamental dilemmas, learn to work within the confines of assumptive worlds, limiting their initiative and their values to fit within the dominant ones. These new processes will be challenged by the demands for new competencies for emerging new role definitions in the face of reforms like school-site management and the demands to reform schools to meet the critical needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

Instructional Leadership

There are no widespread policy proposals supporting assistant principals' involvement as instructional leaders. The array of tasks of assistants actually distances them from curriculum and instruction. Yet, the assistant principalship could be made into a position in which instructional leadership qualities and skill are supported. The literature on "effective schools" has emphasized the importance of the principal functioning as an instructional leader. Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982, p. 21) found that principals in effective schools devote more time to "the coordination and control of instruction, and are more skillful at the tasks involved. They do more observations of teachers' work, discuss more work problems with teachers, are more supportive of teachers' efforts to improve . . . than principals in less effective schools." This effective-principal research gives only a vague description of "instructional leadership behavior"; we still need to know the process by which principal behavior leads to school effectiveness. We need to know what influences a principal to be oriented toward instructionally effective behavior. Finally, we need to know how the assistant principalship functions in facilitating instructional leadership.

To examine instructional leadership questions, we must pay attention to the assistant principalship. Is it possible and/or wise for the assistant to exercise leadership in the instructional program? If so, under what conditions does this happen, with what results? Does being an assistant principal help or hinder a person in learning effective instructional leadership behavior? Does an assistant principal forget the orientation to instruction and to teacher needs while serving in that position?

Unfortunately, few studies to date have focused on the assistant principal and instructional leadership. Glatthorn and Newburg (1984) showed that instructional leadership can emanate from the leadership of people other than the principal. Gross's study (1987) focused on four high school assistant principals who had reputations as instructional leaders. In exploratory case studies, he found evidence that these administrators' predispositions to instruction did help them move from the classroom into administration. However, that predisposition did not provide support for

their moving into higher positions; sponsorship was still the critical support for career movement. Further, their principals' power (and propensity) to shift their tasks (even when they had clearly stated job descriptions) and the ever-pressing need to manage the discipline function undermined these assistants in their efforts to focus on curriculum and instructional issues.

The one assistant who was able to focus on instruction was quite atypical. First, he had stated explicitly, on taking his job, that he would not work on attendance or discipline. Second, he and the other administrators at his school worked autonomously. Third, there were four assistant principals in addition to the principal at this site. Fourth, he was content to remain in the assistantship and made no effort to move up in the career hierarchy. These are rare circumstances.

Thus we cannot simplistically declare that assistants should focus on instruction and curriculum. The realities of the pressing tasks, the principals' power to alter task assignments at will, and the career consequences must be considered.

Achieving Equity in Administration

Women and minorities do not attain assistant principalships as readily as white males. The traditional view of the assistant principalship, which emphasizes discipline, facilities management, and supervision of extracurricular athletics activities, says that it is a job inappropriate for women.

Remarkably, no one knows how many assistant principals there are in the United States, let alone how many are women and/or minority. Therefore, this section has to refer to data from the 1970s and from higher-level administrators.

Many women who aspire to administrative careers are convinced that stereotypical thinking about women's roles and about the traits required to perform on the job is the major barrier for them. In fact, Table 4.4 supports this perception. It shows that minorities who are men are able to attain the assistant principal position; one position in seven was held by a minority male in 1978. Women and minorities have difficulty finding sponsors because

TABLE 4.4 Percentages of Women and of Minority Women and Minority Men by Ethnicity in Selected Administrative Positions in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1974, 1976, and 1978

Subgroups	*Central Office Executive Positions*			*Principals*			*Nonteaching Assistant Principals*			*Consultants/ Supervisors*		
	1974	*1976*	*1978*[a]	*1974*	*1976*	*1978*[a]	*1974*	*1976*	*1978*[a]	*1974*	*1976*	*1978*[a]
Percentage of women	14.1	16.6	17.5	12.7	13.0	13.3	18.5	18.3	22.2	50.4	51.6	54.6
Percentage of minority women	2.3	3.0	3.2	2.2	2.6	2.8	5.1	5.4	5.4	9.3	11.0	11.0
Black women	1.9	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.3	2.4	4.7	4.8	4.7	7.8	8.7	8.3
Hispanic women	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.6	1.2	1.7	1.9
Asian women	—[b]	0.1	0.1	—	—	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4
Native American women	—	0.1	0.2	—	—	0.1	—	—	—	0.1	0.3	0.3
Percentage of minority men	5.0	5.8	5.8	7.1	7.6	7.3	12.7	13.6	13.8	4.8	5.0	5.4
Black men	3.6	3.7	3.6	5.7	5.8	5.6	11.0	11.4	11.4	3.5	3.5	3.6
Hispanic men	1.0	1.6	1.7	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.8	2.0	1.0	1.1	1.1
Asian men	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5
Native American men	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2

SOURCE: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1974, 1976, 1978).

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to subgroup total percentages because of rounding errors. Mail questionnaires were sent to stratified samples of school districts with 250 or more students.

a. These percentages are estimates because data are not included for several large school systems.

b. Less than .05%.

most sponsors are white males who are more likely to identify with people very much like themselves.

Numerous reviews document the extensive research demonstrating women's competencies for administration (Marshall, 1989). Further, women earn more than half of the master's and almost half of the doctorates in educational administration (National Center for Education Statistics, 1989). In an analysis of Pennsylvania's administrators, Pavan (1985) showed that plenty of women were certified. She concluded that, if during the previous 15 years, a certified woman had been hired for any available administrative position, 73% of those positions would be held by women. Clearly, there is no "applicant pool" problem.

There are no comprehensive studies on women and ethnic minorities in the assistant principalship, but studies on the principalship can provide insights. Lovelady-Dawson (1980, p. 21) summarized research literature that showed that (a) minority principals are most often found in schools with more than 20% minority population, (b) minority women suffer doubly because sponsorship is so crucial and most sponsors are white males, and (c) "minorities who persist in administrative aspirations take longer to advance than their majority counterparts." She pointed out that "minority principals, no matter how well-trained, experienced, and dedicated, may face many barriers to effective performance" arising from confused role expectations—such as being a spokesperson for the minority community, punitive disciplinarian, or defender of the minority causes—that affect minority principals' relationships with their faculty and staff, their students and the community, and the local superintendent and school board (Lovelady-Dawson, 1980, pp. 21-22).

As "culture-bearers," minority administrators become the representatives of their ethnic group, with the duty to educate others about their cultural heritage (Hughes, 1988). Black administrators must perform competently while overcoming negative stereotypes. Hispanic administrators are grouped together even though the Hispanic community includes diverse sociocultural and political subgroups and different histories of integration and immigration. The Hispanic administrator has the task of translating culturally different values and interactions of his or her group while, at the same time, having to

work in the predominantly Anglo-Saxon administrative culture. Native American and Asian American administrators too have the task of representing their cultural groups (even though they are diverse) and translating the dominant culture.

Another literature review by Haven, Adkinson, and Bagley (1980) revealed that ethnic minority administrators often lost their jobs or were demoted during school consolidations that were responses to desegregation and/or economic constraints. For example, the number of black principals in Texas declined by 600 between 1964 and 1970; the number in Delaware declined from 50 in 1964 to 16 in 1970.[3]

In an extensive examination of literature on women in educational administration, Ortiz and Marshall (1988) showed that women were doing everything necessary to exhibit competence but still were not able to attain the top positions in administration. They showed that women continue to fill 66% of the teaching positions in public schools. In 1980, fewer than 1% of the superintendents were women. They showed that the number of women earning educational administration degrees increased from 68 in 1955-1956 to 555 in 1981-1982, but women constituted only 8% of all professors of educational administration, and these few were almost always in low-level positions. These facts show that the efforts and the results for sex equity in educational administration have not been adequate.[4] Laws to forbid sex discrimination are inadequate; the norms and structures of educational administration are too powerful (Marshall & Grey, 1982), and the few women who dare to sue may be committing career suicide.

Ambiguous and subjective methods for training, selecting, and interviewing allow subtle sex discrimination. Women's background experience (e.g., such as being president of a community volunteer group or drama club coach) may be deemed less valuable than the more obvious and traditional experience of the male football coach. The network spreads news of prospective job openings more effectively than formal announcements. Often an "acting" male administrator is on the job right after the position is posted. Furthermore, sponsors are usually male, and they tend to groom protégés who are most like themselves.

Women's awareness of professional norms of loyalty prohibit their use of court action. As shown in Chapter 3, exhibitions of

loyalty are essential; filing a lawsuit against the school board, the principal, or the superintendent are considered disloyal acts. Little activist support is available from professional associations like the American Association of School Administrators and the National Education Association; their activities to promote sex equity are primarily educational and, sometimes, include networking. Finally, monitoring and enforcement of laws against sex discrimination are weak to nonexistent. Funds and expertise for implementing Title IX and for equalizing curriculum materials (e.g., the Women's Educational Equity Act) have never been adequate.

The assistant principalship is a key position in the administrative career ladder. When women have unequal access to the position or when, on obtaining the position, have less opportunity to do the tasks that prepare them to move up, then the assistant principalship is a position that perpetuates inequity. The 1978 statistics did not bode well. Several in-depth studies (Marshall, 1979; Ortiz, 1982) have shown the importance of identifying the informal structures and the norms that create subtle barriers to women who consider administrative careers. These studies, as well as Gaertner's (1980), emphasize the importance of having sponsorship and support in initial career experiences. Also, the experience in the initial administrative position is key in determining whether an individual will be able to aspire to and succeed in attaining higher administrative positions.

McCarthy and Zent (1982) found a large number of women and minority men among all administrative position "recent hires" (those who obtained their positions after 1975). They concluded that affirmative action efforts in their sample districts have been effective: "The proportion of minorities among recently hired administrators was more than twice the proportion of minorities in the national work force." Also, "the male/female ratio among recent hires (65/35), although still discrepant, indicated that progress has been made in bringing female representation among administrative personnel closer in line with the proportion of women in the national work force." (McCarthy & Zent, 1982, p. 24). However, the teaching work force of educators is predominantly female, so simple equity (not affirmative action) should result in 50% to 80% of new administrators being female.

TABLE 4.5 Distribution of School Administrators, 1988

Race/Ethnicity	*Number*	*Percentage*
Native American	227	0.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	553	0.7
Black	7,585	10.0
Hispanic	4,060	5.4
White	63,665	83.6
Total	76,211	100.0

SOURCE: Lunenburg and Ornstein (1991).

They particularly stress the fact that their sample showed that almost half of the elementary principal and more than half of the elementary assistant principal "recent hires" were women. However, women were making far less progress in secondary positions and central office line positions leading to the highest leadership positions. Thus optimism must be tempered by the realization that the progress will not necessarily lead to equal representation of women and minority males.[5]

Unfortunately, federal oversight, special programs for women and minority males, and legal enforcement of affirmative action waned in the 1980s and 1990s. Equity has not been accomplished, and the assistant principalship remains a crucial position for effecting equity. Table 4.5 demonstrates that the equity problem will not go away with small changes. Recent data (Jones & Montenegro, 1990) show that 87.5% of *all* school administrators are white; 95% of all superintendents are male; 73% of all principals are male. This is unsteady and unremarkable progress. Equity will not be achieved easily.

Reducing Role Conflict and Ambiguity and Increasing Role Satisfaction

Perhaps the best insights regarding assistant principals and the question of job satisfaction and tasks and roles are to be gleaned from the Croft and Morton (1977) study. The researchers assumed that assistant principals need more than job security—they also need opportunities for self-development and job enrichment. They assumed that the assistant principal needs a sense of variation and use of higher order skills to attain

a sense of worth and satisfaction.[6] Of particular interest is their finding that 42% in Houston and 61% in Kansas reported they were satisfied with their current position, while 48% in Houston and 39% in Kansas reported: "I am not satisfied with my present position and plan to seek another position" (Croft & Morton, 1977, p. 25). However, only 14% and 25% (Houston and Kansas, respectively) planned to remain in the position of assistant principal.

As a way of understanding role satisfiers, Croft and Morton asked assistant principals to rate job tasks on a scale. They found that tasks of greatest satisfaction were those relating to school public relations programs and informing the public of the school's achievements, the development of orientation programs for teachers and students, responsibility for teacher selection and evaluation, pupil attendance, and responsibility for varsity athletics. Such tasks are related to areas for which the assistant principal was academically prepared and to areas that require unique skills and ability.

Assistant principals said that such tasks as field trips, innovations, and pupil discipline were only slightly satisfying. They found little satisfaction in the tasks that required a lesser degree of academic preparation and ability, such as transportation services, student photographs, non-school building use arrangements, clerical tasks, and the like.

The researchers concluded that the highest satisfaction was to be found in the performance of duties that required a higher degree of expertise and administrative ability than those clerical-related items:

> Satisfaction, therefore, becomes a function of the degree of skill and ability which is perceived in the performance of a task by assistant principals . . . the higher the professional skill and ability perceived, the greater the satisfaction. . . . There is a relationship between job satisfaction and career stability in the position of assistant principal. (Croft & Morton, 1977, p. 57)[7]

Little attention and research are focused on projects to define or refine assistant principal responsibilities. Although practitioners offer advice (e.g., Glant, 1987; LaRose, 1987; Potter, 1980; Shockley & Smith, 1981), no studies identify ways to help

assistant principals find satisfaction in their positions. In 1980, the *NASSP Bulletin* published articles about defining the position by identifying competencies, by clarifying the role and using time management strategies to alleviate stress, by working toward a team approach, by creating formal evaluation processes that are based on the roles, tasks, and values of the school, and by asserting principles for assistants.

Their October 1987 *Bulletin* also contains specific tips for assistant principals. However, we have no evaluations or studies to indicate whether such approaches do indeed help. Does a strictly set job description help an assistant principal cope with role conflicts, or does it hinder action in crises and get in the way of educators' working as teams? Are assistants more satisfied when they are evaluated frequently on stated, formal criteria, or do they find they can accomplish more, both for the school and for their own self-development, by having flexible, wide-ranging responsibilities?

We can gain some insights from the oft-studied principalship in raising these questions. For example, as Stow and Manett (1982) recommend tighter coupling between administrator roles and administrator evaluation, we can ask whether such an approach is useful for assistant principals as well as principals.

For principals, discretionary power is important. Crowson and Porter-Gehrie (1980) found that urban principals use areas of discretion to perform crucial functions for their schools. Principals, faced with ambiguous roles and scarce resources (e.g., time, information, personnel, and technical expertise), must cope by making quick decisions, doing surface monitoring of implementation of policy, and expending energy to preserve the few resources (e.g., students) that enable them to maintain the school. They *use* the flexibility in their positions to redefine their roles, to provide services differentially, to expand certain roles, and to maintain their control over decision making in crucial areas. They act as "street-level bureaucrats," making on-the-spot policy interpretations to keep their schools functioning (Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977). Does it logically follow that assistants would want more flexibility? Or would more flexibility just increase ambiguity? Would they prefer, and feel more secure and satisfied with, explicit, clear, and constrained job descriptions?

One study found that effective central office supervisors are themselves highly flexible. They find the ambiguity, fragmentation, and invisibility of their roles to be useful for enhancing their ability to respond to individual differences, diversified staff, and constantly changing programs and staff (Floyd, 1987). Thus we see that, at high levels of administration, flexibility, discretionary power, and ambiguity can be useful role characteristics.

In an observational study, Marshall (1985a) found assistant principals exercising considerable discretion. One urban assistant principal, who had 20 years' experience in many schools, was described by teachers as the person who "holds this place together." She was observed creating her own interpretation of Public Law 94-142, bartering and negotiating to maintain a cadre of good substitutes, lobbying for program development, and overstepping her responsibility when she determined it was essential to prevent mounting problems.

An NASSP survey (Pellicer, et al., 1988) found that 50% of assistants felt they had considerable discretion in 10 (of 30) areas of responsibility. This, however, represented a *decline* in discretionary behavior since the earlier 1965 study. Thus discretionary power, flexibility, and/or strict definition of responsibilities will affect but not necessarily improve the satisfaction, functioning, and efficacy of the assistant principal.

Progress in Valuing the Role

The Austin and Brown (1970) study showed that principals see the value and important responsibility and functioning of assistant principals more than assistants themselves do. An assistant principal may feel valuable and derive satisfaction from praise and from comments like "He holds this place together" (from a principal) or "She gave me the chance to do better in school" (from a student). However, the traditional way of assessing the status, understanding, and valuing of a person, a position, and a role is by looking at the salaries paid.

The Education Research Service (NASSP, 1991b; Robinson & Brown, 1991) compiles data that show the patterns in salary for educators including assistant principals. Table 4.6 displays the

TABLE 4.6 Average of Salaries Paid Personnel in Selected Professional Positions in All Reporting School Systems, 1989-1990

Position	*Average Annual Salary (in dollars)*
Superintendents	75,425
Assistant superintendents	62,698
Subject area supervisors	45,929
Principals:	
elementary school	48,431
middle school	52,163
high school	55,722
Assistant principals:	
elementary school	40,916
middle school	44,570
high school	46,486
Classroom teachers	31,278

SOURCE: Robinson and Brown (1991).

salaries paid to assistant principals. As can be seen, elementary assistant principals are paid less than middle school assistant principals. High school assistant principals receive the highest salaries among assistant principals.

Interesting comparisons and patterns can also be seen. High school principals receive about $9,000 more than their assistant principals. Middle school and elementary principals receive about $7,500 more than their assistants. Pay raises for principals and assistant principals closely paralleled the raises of teachers and have been greater than the increases in Consumer Price Indexes in 1986 to 1990. Elementary principals make 31% more than teachers when one adjusts for differences in their contracts (usually about 219 days for administrators and 185 for teachers). The 1991 NASSP report shows that the Far West, Great Lakes, New England, and mideast regions pay assistants the most.

These salary patterns reflect the tradition that rewards people who move up in a hierarchy (leaving teaching, then moving from assistant principal to principal) and who move toward line positions, closer to district decision making. They also reflect the tradition (long dispensed with in teacher pay schedules)

that the functions performed in educating older students are more valuable than those performed in elementary schools. Educators make more money as they move farther from the students and instruction.

It is time to investigate the assumptions reflected in administrator salaries. Are there still assumptions that males should be paid more than females and that males will be administrators, particularly for junior high/middle schools and high schools? Are there assumptions that tasks such as supervision of high school extracurricular activities are more valuable than supervision of elementary students or elementary school instructional leadership? It is time to examine pay and promotion patterns and raise questions about how different types of assistant principal roles are rewarded.

Some administrator associations are pressing for laws to allow "meet-and-discuss" negotiations for salary and benefits for principals. Such lobbying could be accompanied by action aimed at equalizing and improving the status, value, and pay of the assistant principal. School and societal values are reflected in administrator pay policies and in the amount of money allocated to support a program or policy. Therefore, whenever school districts assert new policies (e.g., for prevention, individualized instruction, or instructional leadership), questions should be raised about whether salaries and promotions in the district reward people for implementing such goals and policies. Demands for reform can be linked to questions about salary. Every new program taxes school administrators' time. Program proposals, therefore, should include designation of responsibility to person(s) and money set aside to buy their time. This is seldom done (Verstegan, 1988). Policy analyses must calculate the human costs and recommend adequate resources.

Facing Fundamental Dilemmas

To what extent are administrators, particularly assistant principals, able to examine different ways of filling administrator roles and alternative ways to make the system work? When faced with large societal problems, in the form of pregnant

students, students whose special needs are considered low priority, or students with no understanding of English, how do administrators search for solutions? How well does the assistant principal cope with parents who see schools as places that help the middle class do well but only train the poor for continued poverty? How well can the administrator cope when explaining to students from poor families why the breakfast program no longer exists? Should the assistant principal suppress the ensuing conflicts when implementing innovations that conflict with the standard curriculum? Have there been any attempts to rethink the fundamental assumptions of schooling to deal with these persistent societal and professional dilemmas?

Reforms

Reforms of the early and middle 1980s contained proposals for altering the education system that *increased* the responsibilities of assistant principals (and other educators) but decreased their control over decisions about what is important in the day-to-day functioning of schools and about long-term goals for schooling. National commission reports and the frenetic activity at the state level have generally led to demands for new policy implementation, with statewide testing, tougher curriculum, mandated homework, increased demand for monitoring instruction, and staff development. Through the 1980s, states increased centralization of authority, and state legislators, state boards, and governors heightened their interest in and their control over schools. Statewide testing, for example, increased monitoring of district and site performance. Graduation tests and minimum competency tests, sometimes accompanied by demands for remediation programs, were popular policies that increased site administrators' responsibilities. District and school "report cards" make school-site performance highly visible. Many states and districts have increased their curriculum, testing, and remediation requirements.

Increased decision-making power and flexibility at the school site and "empowering " teachers to participate in that decision making create new roles for administrators. Still another popular policy thrust, parental choice, places site administrators

in a new competitive mode. Such contrasting trends in policy leave assistant principals and principals in a flurry of contradictory activity. Proposals for restructuring schooling or rethinking the hierarchical control models of managing schools seldom include time and resources for the change process.

Fundamental changes—in assumptions, in modes of thinking and interacting, in professional norms, in professional and organizational culture—are not accomplished by fiat. Without the resources, educators will absorb reform thrusts as tiring alterations in the status quo. Assistant principals will still be expected to fill the maintenance and control functions, keeping students and teachers "in line." Teachers will not trust the administrators who, on the one hand, proffer entreaties for collegial decision making with teachers and, on the other hand, closely monitor their compliance with the state model for good teaching and their ability to stay "on task" with state curriculum. Without clear, consistent, and holistic reform, there will be no real change in the education system. Reforms of the 1980s and 1990s leave assistant principals with managing the same chronic fundamental dilemmas—with one difference. Reform thrusts leave them accountable for increased productivity (student performance) with no increase in resources or time and with less flexibility.

All told, these trends take away site-level administrators' flexibility. Further, they take away inducements (in the form of vocational education, sports, extracurricular activities, humanities, arts, and social programs) that have helped administrators and teachers to deal with students who are dissatisfied with the academic program. With Reagan's "New Federalism" of the 1980s, we saw the demise of federal categorical programs, which left many districts with fewer administrators and program specialists with special funding, but the student and parent needs and the expectations centered in those programs did not disappear. On the other hand, increased reforms leave assistants in new quandaries. Assistant principals, on the front line with students, faculty, and community people, cannot hide behind commission reports and clean new legislation. They must somehow explain to a parent when the categorical funds for a program are gone and certain children's special needs will not be met.

Assistants must find ways to get teachers to cooperate on curriculum development when they are angry about the imposition of teacher accountability mechanisms. They must comply with, and support, new state policies that were devised without the involvement of the people who know the most about the issues at hand.

The assistant principals face these fundamental dilemmas daily. They may soon learn to filter them out of their consciousness so that they focus on getting the job done and on being evaluated as cooperative, loyal, and essential to the ongoing functioning of the system. That does not mean the fundamental problems have disappeared—it means assistant principals are being successfully socialized into the administrative culture.

Such conditions accentuate the continuing dilemmas of school administrators. Assistant principals see declining resources, declines in enrollment, a decline in public confidence in schools, aging faculties, continuous flight from public schooling, and lack of incentive to attract creative, inspired, and intelligent young people to educational careers (Boyd, 1983).

The assistant principal's voice needs to be heard as educators, policymakers, and citizens seek to define the problems in education. Assistant principals see them firsthand, daily; they cope with the dilemmas of schooling—the dilemmas that cannot be solved by the current ways of thinking.

Summary

This chapter has shown the areas of progress, the proposals, the programs, and the structures for affecting school administrators and for improving the assistant principalship. Some promising and useful projects are under way, but chronic problems continue.

It is important that those concerned with schooling and school administration have a sense of responsibility, involvement, and a guide to action for addressing the concerns of the assistant principalship. Figure 4.1 provides such a guide. In this chart, the concerns are displayed, and the groups who can best address those concerns are identified. The next chapter provides a range of proposals for change. Perhaps this book will serve as a call to action.

AREAS FOR IMPROVING	Funding Agencies	State Depts. of Educ.	Professional Assns.	County & Regional Units	Universities	Local Districts	Schools (site level)	Individuals	Policymakers	Soc. Science Researchers	Courts	Community
Training and Support												
Conferences, workshops, staff development		X	X	X	X	X			X			
Sponsors, networks, role models		X	X	X	X	X	X					
Management teams & participating management						X	X	X				
Recruitment and Selection												
Assessment centers, tests		X	X	X	X	X			X			
Women & minority access	X	X	X	X	X				X		X	
Understanding and Valuing the Role												
Salaries			X			X						
Research	X		X		X					X		
Discretionary power & recognition			X			X	X	X				
Start-up funds, specialization, titles	X	X		X		X	X	X		X		
Defining Role												
Certification		X	X		X				X	X		
Role negotiation, rotation						X	X	X				
Rethinking Assumptions												
Critiquing reforms			X	X	X	X			X			X
A critical look at equity			X		X				X	X	X	X
Training for critical humanists	X	X			X				X			
Creating new metaphors & structures			X		X	X	X	X	X			X
Examining fundamental dilemmas			X		X				X	X		X

Key: An "X" means that the group has major responsibility; however, all groups share the responsibility.

Figure 4.1. Key Groups and Areas for Improving the Assistant Principalship

NOTE: An "X" means that the group has major responsibility; however, all the groups share the responsibility.

Notes

1. A validation study of the assessment center approach confirmed its content and predictive validity. Raters generally agreed on assessments, and experts agreed that the skills being assessed were relevant to the ability to perform the major task dimensions on the job. In their comparative analysis,

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Hogan and Zenke (1986) found that a streamlined assessment center process had greater predictive validity and cost-effectiveness than paper-and-pencil tests, interviews, and the whole assessment center system.

2. Bridges and Baehr (1971), noting that testing must be shown to be significantly correlated with important elements of the job for which the candidate is being evaluated, showed that many districts' processes might be questioned. Assessment centers and tests *do* meet the court-imposed standards, which assert that selection processes must be based on job-related criteria (see *Chance v. Board of Examiners*, F. Supp. 203 [S.D.N.Y. 1971], Aff'd 458 F.2D 1167 [2d Cir., 1972]).

3. Their review sheds more interesting light on the status of women and ethnic minorities. For example, minority administrators were more likely to be in charge of special projects, particularly if they were women; minority secondary principals were most likely to be working in large urban school districts; minority women principals tended to be in elementary schools in large urban school districts; Chicano administrators often entered the education profession through counseling and teacher aide positions during the 1960s, earning credentials while on the job; and in education fields in 1977, minority women earned 9.4% of the master's and 5.2% of the doctoral degrees; minority men earned 4.2% of the master's and 7.4% of the doctoral degrees. Thus, while minorities are obtaining the credentials and degrees, those who enter administration do not enter by traditional career paths and many hold staff positions distant from the center of decision making.

4. The major federal legislation aimed at sex equity in education, Title IX, was being undermined by federal administrative policies, court decisions, and the Women's Educational Equity Act, which had the purpose of creating programs and materials for implementing equity across the country. (The act's funding averaged only about $7 million between 1977 and 1984.)

5. Among 2,134 respondents from 46 school districts (in six states representing different geographic regions in 1980), 19% were Caucasian females, 6% were minority females, 10% were minority males, and 64% were Caucasian males. This research confirmed the patterns identified in other research. Their data about the assistant principalship showed that (a) 15% were minority males, and 13% were Caucasian women, and 18% were minority females; and (b) of the assistant secondary principals, 68% were Caucasian males, 20% were minority males, 8% were Caucasian females, and 4% were minority women.

6. Croft and Morton (1977) used responses from assistant principals in Kansas as well as from 102 Houston (urban and suburban) assistant principals. Only 6% of their sample had served as assistant principals for 10 years or longer and 51% had been in the position for only 1-3 years. In many cases (41% in Kansas and 30.5% in Houston), "principal in conference with assistant principal" was the way of assigning duties to these assistants, although 24% in Kansas and 35% in Houston said the principal alone determined the assistant's duties.

7. The researchers note the relationship of greater satisfaction with the fact that more than 90% of the sample had received in-service training relevant to their position in the previous two years.

5

A New and Different Assistant Principalship

> I just want what most people want in their jobs—a little room to try out new things, decent pay, to be backed up by my boss when I try something, to get pats on the back when something I do works well, to have some control over what I do day to day, and to work with neat people in my profession.
>
> —An anonymous, but typical, assistant principal

All professionals want their work lives to have the following elements: flexibility, support, opportunities for satisfaction and job enhancement, a degree of control over the way to carry out the work, ways to get a sense that their work is valued, and affiliation with fellow professionals (Vollmer & Mills, 1966). How can the assistant principalship be improved so that individuals will experience these things? How can the problems be addressed?

This chapter is a search for possible improvements in the roles, training, selection, incentives, and recruitment for administration, and it shows the implications of reconceptualizing the assistant principalship.

The first section emphasizes small alterations in the current system. The suggestions do not question or change the current overarching structure; rather, they repair minor problems. Such changes are often labeled "Band-Aids" to denote a "quick-fix" approach. Nevertheless, they offer useful and positive ways to enrich the work lives of assistants. The second

section uses the assistant principalship as the impetus for a critical examination of schooling and offers suggestions for more radical change.

The first step in improving the assistant principalship rests in defining what it is, what it should be, and what it is not. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 have shown what we know about the position, and Chapter 4 identified areas of progress. Now, having established what we know, we proceed to recommend potential changes.

Before we can start altering job descriptions, training personnel, rewarding the instruction-minded, or proposing scholarships for women and minorities, we must discuss the complex nature of the assistant principalship. Every set of understandings about who assistants are and what they do emerged from an evolving culture in school administration. Therefore, every change will reverberate through that culture, affecting the people and the work.

For example, if school systems suddenly start selecting as assistant principals people who are excellent instructional leaders, who will assume the traditional assistant principal function of maintaining order in schools? Will such people ever have a chance for upward mobility if the principalship and superintendency continue to be positions where political, financial, and crisis management skills are essential? What is an instructional leader anyway? Should instructional leadership be an administrative function, or should we explore instead the possibility that teachers should take more leadership in instruction?

What if we decide that all assistant principals must get state certification through formal course work? Should educators expand the responsibility of university professors and state bureaucrats and politicians in defining credentialing?

Or suppose districts decide on strict definitions of assistant principal functions to reduce role ambiguity. How will this affect assistant principals who want to use the position as a place for trying out creative ideas?

Obviously, no single proposal for reconceptualizing the assistant principalship can address all possible anticipated and unanticipated consequences. A change in one part of a school system will affect the whole. The following proposals are ideas for discussion and experimentation—not guaranteed quick fixes.

Specific Alterations in the Current System

Many scholars and policymakers argue that tinkering with the system will achieve little improvement. However, there are specific alterations that would improve the lot of the assistant. (For more proposals and materials, see *National Association of Secondary School Principals*, 1987, 1991a; Marshall, 1990.)

Defining Roles, Tasks, and Functions

Some schools make little effort to describe the assistant principal's position beyond saying that this person is to assist the principal in all administrative tasks. Other schools construct job descriptions for the assistant principal that are well specified and finely tailored to the particular school site. Schools with more than one assistant principal will often divide areas of responsibility, but, even with such specification, the roles, tasks, and functions undergo constant informal negotiation. When community drug programs are started, when state funds and mandates add programs or grants become available, new functions in the job of the assistant principal arise. New tasks and new technologies also challenge current responsibilities. Suddenly, the assistant has the new job of managing computerized student accounting systems. Unanticipated crises like teacher strikes, a principal's illness, and community protests over safety or sex education require school-site administrators to forget job descriptions and pitch in. Principals and central office administrators, when faced with a task that they either cannot do or do not want to do, may assign their assistants the job. Or principals may redesign job descriptions so that the assistant can have an opportunity to explore, develop, and test new areas of skill and expertise.

Whether or not schools provide them with clear job descriptions, assistant principals live with a degree of role ambiguity; they must negotiate responsibilities and engage in activities that get the attention of superiors to enhance their chances for upward mobility. Role ambiguity benefits assistant principals who have support for being risk takers, who have sponsors showing them how to see, grab, and succeed in areas that are district problems and challenges. When assistants' roles are

ambiguous, some important functions may be given short shrift. The assistant principal who has little sense of how to assertively take on an area of responsibility may never dare do more than wait for orders. He or she may never feel secure enough to do any long-range planning or develop innovative approaches to managing school problems. Without the ability to set the priorities, without control over their time, assistant principals miss things that most professionals seek. The assistant principal whose job description seems to be "do everything the principal can't and doesn't want to face" will probably feel tremendous dissatisfaction with the position.

Role negotiation. One possible way to provide the appropriate mix of stability and clarity of job expectations, while still providing challenge and opportunity for assistant principals, is *semiannual role negotiation* among the site administrators. If the assistant principals and the principals know that they will renegotiate job responsibilities on a regular basis, task assignments do not become a life sentence; moreover, assistant principals will be encouraged to propose exciting projects or new ways to approach difficult problems because they will experience a sense of professional autonomy. Assistant principals in charge of seventh grade discipline, who see that they cannot "prove themselves" unless they handle older students, might trade duties with another assistant principal. If assistant principals are saddled with all extracurricular and discipline duties one year, the negotiated understanding is that the next year they have a chance to implement their ideas for using curricular and academic activities to improve the school climate. Similarly, the principal who wants to expend time and energy on staff development may request that the assistant principals take on the burden of school-community relations.

This negotiation should be a formal process that occurs at set times each year and should be carried out in a retreat setting *away* from school demands. Informal role negotiation occurs naturally but informally, causing tension and competition among administrators. "Formal role negotiation" would bring this micro-political process into the open. Assistant principals and the principal should have ample time to talk about their ideas, their role satisfactions, and their successes and failures in a relaxed, nonevaluative, and collegial manner, as fellow

professionals in the administrative team. Such administrative team retreats, away from immediate crises and interruptions, would be symbols signifying the importance of administrative roles.

Job rotation. Similarly, administrative tasks and areas of responsibility may be rotated among the administrators according to an agreed-upon schedule. For example, the junior high assistants may rotate into the senior high after two years. This procedure should serve the same function as semiannual role negotiation, allowing variation and equal opportunity and access to tasks that enhance visibility and widened experience.

However, not all tasks *should* be transferred. Most administrative tasks are continuous, never-completed responsibilities. Additionally, administrators might avoid or limit special projects if they know their project will be rotated to someone else in six months. Job rotation, therefore, should be used if there is so much conflict and competition that role negotiation fails.

Specialization. A quite different approach would be to define assistant principal positions in detail for particular purposes and provide specific supports, expectations, and rewards for these specialists. A job opening can be advertised as Assistant Principals for Instruction or Assistant Principal for Pupil Personnel. Individuals seeking that job will know up front their tasks, the criteria for judging their performance, their opportunity for interaction with superiors, their affiliations with other professionals, their future training and career chances, and what their daily work lives will be. They will shape their work around these clear realities. Similarly, the principal and the selection committee can be more certain about the qualifications expected and the kinds of support and guidance to give the specialist assistant principal. Such a specialist will have respect for a particular area of expertise and may be used as a district resource (e.g., for staff development and monitoring other such specialists).

Reassessing the Value of Assistant Principals

Why do so many assistant principals want to move up to higher positions? Higher salary, status, and power certainly

serve as powerful incentives. In fact, we know that many view the position merely as a stepping-stone to higher administrative positions. There are two problems arising from this use of the positions: (a) Only a select few can move into high positions, particularly in districts with declining enrollment, and (b) the assistant principal performs crucial functions in schools. Therefore, school districts need to find ways to support good people who *want to stay* in assistant principal positions and find career satisfaction in the position. This section explores several different ways to alter the perceptions of the value of the assistant principal.

Promoting the Value of Assistant Principal Functions

To the person on the street, the assistant principal is thought of as the person who handles disruptive kids and does every unwanted administrative job. Many would probably characterize the assistant principal as an angry, frustrated person who is low on the totem pole of school hierarchies. This stereotype ignores the key functions served by assistant principals: holding the line on student control and picking up duties where the principal left off.

Few people recognize the efforts of assistant principals to expand their responsibilities and to make individual contributions to improving school programs and climate. No movie stars or television series bring the job to life and show the valiant efforts, the dilemmas, and the important issues faced by assistant principals. Few novels are written about educators generally, let alone about assistant principals. Television and movie portrayals of assistant principals are consistently unflattering. Yet, every assistant principal has the sense that important elements in his or her school would disintegrate without an assistant principal's efforts.

The first step in improving assistant principals' and others' valuing of the position is exploring, defining, and disseminating information about their work. Lortie (1975), in *Schoolteacher,* wrote about teachers: what motivates them, what they are like, and what satisfies them in their jobs. Wolcott (1973), in *The Man in the Principal's Office,* showed the myriad functions

and demands on a typical principal. The superintendency has been studied a great deal. Now it is time to identify how assistant principals' work fits into the ongoing functioning of schooling, how assistant principals actually carry out their work, and what satisfies and frustrates them.

The studies reported in Chapter 3 begin this examination. In-depth research based on interviews and observation of a range of assistant principals can help educators and the general public move beyond stereotyped views of assistants. Principals can read such works and be moved to alter school-site work arrangements. District, state, and university policymakers can draw implications about training, certification, salary, and career incentives.

Beyond research, the public and professional understanding of the assistant principalship can be facilitated by school districts and professional associations supporting workshops and presentations of innovative, workable practices in the assistant principal positions. There is a real need for inspired, research-based information telling the world about the ways in which assistant principals are essential to the ongoing work of schooling. In addition, these associations and districts, along with universities and state departments of education, should consider the special needs for training, self-renewal, and support of assistants principals.

Finally, it is important to examine whether the salary and status of assistant principals are sufficient for maintaining the integrity of the position. Are they enough to keep good practitioners satisfied with being there and devoting their full energies, loyalties, and expertise year after year?

Staff Development, Workshops, and Conferences

The assistant principal frequently takes on myriad tasks without ever having any formal training and without anyone to help. This sink-or-swim approach works for assistant principals who have support from understanding families as they deal with stress and from sponsors and mentors who give them guidance. What appears to be survival of the fittest is actually survival of the ones who find informal training and support.

With improvements in training and support, the assistant principalship can be altered to be less stressful, and those who fill the job can be more skilled, creative, and more able to work on long-rang planning.

Assistant principals need training and support to enable them to manage the tasks and responsibilities faced in the position such as discipline, scheduling, and extracurricular activities. (Downing, 1983, offers "skill-builder" exercises.) But beyond this, assistant principals need to be prepared to fill the *roles and functions* of administrators and to face the *fundamental dilemmas* in administration as described in the previous chapters. This section suggests various ways to improve training and support.

Celebrations and Special Conferences

Celebrating assistants and giving attention to their special needs can occur in retreats and statewide or regional conferences or workshops. Administrators' associations could recruit new members by addressing assistants' special needs. State departments of education and university programs can offer one- to two-day workshops or one- to two-week academies.

The South Carolina administrators' association is initiating two- to three-day conferences aimed at assistant principals, "curriculum coordinators," and "instructional lead teachers," finding these entry-level administrators eager for professional development. Important elements include (a) keeping elementary, middle, and high school administrators together, (b) convening at a nice location with a good hotel and receptions to convey honor, status, relaxation, and special treatment, (c) creating a "job bank," (d) creating a state-level awards program for the assistant principal of the year to create role models and convey status, and (e) finding opportunities to place assistants on critical committees (district, regional, state, and national). This approach is difficult because assistants do not control budgets and because they are usually required to stay at the school site to enable the principal to go to conferences (Don Beers, South Carolina Association of School Administrators, 421 Zimalcrest Dr., Columbia, SC 29210, personal communication, March 18, 1991).

Assistant Principal Academies can perform similar functions. The most efficient approach would combine the needs and resources of a county or a region for a one- to two-week summer experience. But a three-day summer retreat, assisted by consultants and continued by district support and study groups, can serve specific district purposes. One such experience (described in Peterson, Marshall, & Grier, 1987) was designed to fill a superintendent's agenda to recruit "a new breed" of administrator.

University and Professional Training

University programs for master's, doctorates, and special certificates can be used to focus on the needs of assistant principals. The master's degree is the most logical place to focus on site-level administrators because most master's students aspire to or occupy those positions. This should be planned with the advice and involvement of education professional associations and should be aimed at integrating skill building with knowledge. Training should not consist of simple recipes and checklists for managing administrative tasks, because this will not fit all schools or emerging issues and problems.

Assistant principals, while learning skills through simulations, role-playing, and practice, should also learn, from the literature on schooling, about how their functioning fits into the bigger picture of school administration. For example, assistant principals may collect and analyze various discipline policies and procedures as an exercise aimed at widening their information base. Yet, simultaneously, they should have readings and guided discussions that help them to see how discipline follows certain assumptions about the nature of students and about the role of schools in socializing children to be workers and orderly citizens. Similarly, as they listen to seasoned administrators describe their processes for handling school-community relations, aspiring administrators should read and discuss literature that helps them to see the political structure of education. In this manner, they can develop a leadership style. They can have an awareness not only of past practices but also of a questioning search for a style that facilitates community, teacher, parent, and student participation.

University and professional associations need to work as teams whose combined efforts can improve school administration. Universities and professional associations can have their strongest impact on aspiring potential administrators such as assistant principals. They can create appropriate training programs for people who are at the stage where they are just beginning to form an orientation to the administrative role. They can have great impact on those who are actively searching for role models and workable strategies. They can be of great assistance to those who are searching for ways to manage the conflicts between professional and bureaucratic demands. Assistant Principal Academies, created with the shared expertise of practicing administrators and professors, would highlight assistants' special needs and provide them with skills and career decision-making experiences (Peterson et al., 1987).

By actively identifying, recruiting, and supporting individuals as they *enter* administrative positions, universities and professional associations can most strongly affect the way administrators define their roles and leadership styles. This is also the best time to affect their competencies and their sense of professionalism as administrators. At this stage of professional development, future administrators may be more open to ideas about instructional leadership and to discussing the education system's perpetuation of racism, class bias, sexism, and poverty. At this stage, the aspiring administrator may be shocked at the overwhelming demands on administrators and may be searching desperately for management techniques. Before getting locked into a particular style of managing crises, making decisions, and setting priorities, the fledgling administrator can *see, try out, and experience* the value of various approaches to decision making. Such eventual administrators may be more likely to engage in participatory decision making or expend efforts for more wide-ranging searches for solutions. They are more likely to forgo quick-fix solutions, to persist in getting schools to face fundamental dilemmas even though there may be no immediate solutions, measurable progress, or reward.

Finally, universities and professional associations can identify, recruit, train, place, and support women and minorities. This can work only if the groups devise continuous programs

that prepare individuals for administrative careers while altering school districts whose formal and informal policies have diminished opportunities in the past. It does no good to put women and minorities through special programs with scholarships and then send them forth to cope in an environment where they will be excluded from informal communications and evaluated as less than competent when they do not conform to white male norms or when they display a leadership style that is different.

Sponsors, Role Models, and Mentors

Assistant principals who have sponsors or mentors will greatly benefit from the specific advice, confidence building, access to opportunity, and caring guidance. Some benefit from the visibility and sense of belonging that comes from being a protégé of a powerful sponsor. But these relationships do not just naturally develop for all aspiring administrators.

People engage in mentoring and sponsoring when they see someone they think has the potential to carry out a school administrative career very much like they did. Thus sponsors and mentors help continue current practice and provide support and role models for a select few. Those who aspire to administrative careers without this support may flounder, may devise varied and different ways of managing administrative tasks, and may never attain high positions in administration.

School districts could create *sponsor-mentor banks,* lists of people who have experience and are part of a network of school administrators. These people would agree to be resources and sources of career advice for aspiring administrators. Ideally, administrators should be able to draw from the resources in neighboring districts if regional sponsor-mentor banks could be coordinated, perhaps by a professional association, a state department of education, a county system, or a university.

All conferences and professional meetings should have specific times set aside when administrators can meet with those in the sponsor-mentor bank. To achieve the status of sponsor-mentor, persons must provide evidence that they have helped other administrators gain competence and move up in administration. They must prepare a statement for a directory of

sponsor-mentors discussing particular areas of expertise and interest and displaying their mentoring credentials.

Particular preference should be given to individuals with ability to think about how to shape the assistant principalship and how to develop potential leaders. They also should be individuals who can demonstrate that they have helped women and minorities attain administrative positions. They also should be able to bridge the gap between universities and practitioners and, for example, help negotiate roles and assist in discussions for rethinking assumptions about administration.

Internships

People usually have some image or stereotype of jobs as they make career decisions. They have vague ideas about what kind of people are "right" for the job, about what the challenges encountered and tasks performed in that job are. Based on that vague sense, they decide whether or not to leave their current position and take the steps required (extra training, job interviews, new tasks) to enter the new position. Much of this is based on incomplete information, and so it is risky.

Entering the assistant principalship means separating from teachers, seeking to be included with administrators, crossing a major career boundary to carry out very different tasks, affiliating with a different set of people, and managing some major crises and dilemmas. Those who contemplate this move need to have a period of reality testing. Internships would allow them to follow several assistant principals through a workweek in several schools, watching and questioning the meaning of the behavior, words, and interactions of administrators.

The internship should be guided by a university program or a professional association. Aspirants should be engaged in questions about the function of administration and about their own fit (emotionally, intellectually) with the job. Internships should be "dressing rooms," where aspirants see if the role is comfortable and satisfying. Interns should get advice about the sorts of training and alterations that would be required to make them fit and the degree to which the aspirant can shape the position to fit. Interns should be exposed to the satisfiers,

dissatisfiers, and conflicts in the position. The purpose of internships is immersion in the real—getting beyond the stereotype.

The internship should be deemed successful if the person forges ahead for a shining career in administration. It also should be deemed successful if an intern, upon seeing the dilemmas and tasks of administration, concludes that he or she prefers to stay in the classroom. Sometimes one emerges from the dressing room with clear knowledge that the outfit is just right. Just as often, the verdict is "just right for someone, but not for me!"

Recruitment and Selection

Chapter 2 described typical ways in which assistant principals recruit themselves or get encouragement, apply for positions, and go through selection processes for assistant principal positions. Assuming that districts want to promote the most able, intelligent, and creative people for administrative positions, one can identify ways to improve recruitment and selection. Schools will benefit if the pool of applicants for administrative careers is widened, if the career is attractive to more people, and if the process for selecting and promoting administrators is fine-tuned.

First, education systems must send out a message that the administration career *truly wants* people who are women, who are ethnic minorities, and who, in other ways, differ from the current stereotype of administrators. Statements like "we are equal opportunity employers" will not be believed until educators see evidence that administrators support and value people who are different. Tokenism will not work; tokens are people who are alone, without support, and excluded from the crucial informal network of communication among administrators. Without changes, schooling will suffer as competent women and minorities move away from education into careers with more equal access.

Specific proposals include the following: (a) Pay women, ethnic minorities, and people with different career experiences to speak to student teachers and teacher groups and to serve as role models and career advisers. (b) Provide scholarships and internships particularly for women and minorities. (c) Require

the state department of education to employ persons whose specific responsibility is training school boards and administrators to identify the barriers to women and ethnic minorities entering administrative careers and to create district-specific structures to recruit and support the successful advancement of women and ethnic minorities. These persons would also monitor districts' assertions about being equal opportunity employers. No district should be allowed to publish this assertion until filing proof of hiring, training, support, salaries, selection policies, and *results* in terms of rapid progress toward equity in numbers of women and minorities in administration positions (Marshall, 1989). (d) Disseminate (through conferences, educators' journals, department of education directives) information about employee rights, including specific information about how to use media, grievance action, and class action lawsuits to get school districts to take action to equalize the access of women and ethnic minorities to administrative careers.

Second, assistant principalship vacancies should be advertised widely. Often, principalships and higher positions are widely advertised, but announcements of assistant principal vacancies are kept within districts. Very few positions are advertised across state lines. As a result, administration is inbred; educators who wish to enter administrative careers are confined to the status of waiting for someone to die or retire in their own districts, especially if they have no sponsorship. State departments of education or professional associations should maintain computer banks of available positions and provide interested educators from any state information about administrative openings.

Third, selection committees should not expect applicants to be familiar with the politics of a particular district. An administrator must, of course, have the sensitivity and ability to function in the midst of conflicts in values. Too often, the person who gets through the selection process is the one who is known to be on the same side of a current controversy as the majority of the people on a selection committee—that is, a person who is an insider. This bias in the selection process creates a kind of "groupthink," an administrative culture in which no creative ideas are spawned and conflict is suppressed rather than addressed. Individuals with administrative potential from opposing camps or from other districts will not be chosen.

Assessment centers such as those developed by the NASSP, by concentrating on assessing the competencies of individuals in the areas that the job requires, are promising ways that could be adapted for the selection of assistant principals. They *should* assess an individual's competence and sensitivity to community and district politics and to the fundamental professional/bureaucratic conflicts, along with assessment in discipline management and staff supervision. Additional revisions of the assessment center approach should incorporate these perspectives.

Fourth, districts should invest time, money, and personnel in selecting assistant principals. The assistant principal of today may be the superintendent of tomorrow. Too often, the assistant principal is selected without a search for options, consideration of possible redefinitions of the position, assessment of needs, or consultation with many of the people who will be affected by the assistant principal. Frequently, the principal, without time or resources to invest in the selection process, chooses the person whose main qualification is a recommendation through the administrator grapevine, who is adequate but who perhaps is not the best candidate available.

Findings on principal selection can guide the search for better selection of assistants. Dentler and Baltzell (1983, p. 5) found that, for the improvement of principal selection, "the specific technical process features . . . are not as important as the *basic commitment to the aim of a better [principal selection process]*, which must be widely shared and doggedly pursued if success is to be achieved." They said that any district can improve selection by clearly and widely publicizing shifts toward more merit- and equity-based approaches. Districts also must undertake self-study to identify problems and invest money and school board-backed authority for changes; then, selection processes must reflect these changed priorities. For example, community members must be part of the selection team where community ties are a key priority.

Selection improvements lead to new efficacy where people *believe* "that anyone who meets the widely announced eligibility criteria is really welcome to apply" (Dentler & Baltzell, 1983, p. 7). Potential applicants must see and believe that eligibility criteria require a number of experiences and competencies that are attainable through widely accessible training.

Most important, selection processes will be respected when there are better *outcomes* that reflect stated priorities. Where the old procedures continue and a preponderance of male coaches are selected, no new priorities are established. But if new procedures clearly result in selecting more women, more ethnic minorities, and more instructionally oriented administrators, people will believe there are new priorities and a logic and fairness in selection processes. They will respect the process because the outcomes reflected the stated priorities.

Certification

Altering certification policies is one of the main mechanisms whereby state-level policymakers affect education in all school districts. States vary in their policies for certification of school administrators, but every assistant principal who wants to continue an administrative career must face the state requirements.

In many states, the requirements for administrative certification are decided by a commission that invites the involvement of professional associations, universities, and citizens as well as state departments of education and legislative officials. Serious proposals for altering the training and minimum requirements for administrative certification, if passed, can alter the composition of the administrative ranks. For example, states could require all administrators to serve in internships, to take courses on instructional management, to take courses on children with disabilities, on racism and sexism in education, and on computer applications for administration and/or to pass competency tests.

Policymakers could decide to raise the standards on written tests, put more discretion in the hands of local districts, or put the entire responsibility for certification into university programs. Professional associations could lobby to try to gain control and responsibility for certification.

No changes should be implemented without considering spin-off effects because changes in certification can affect an entire state. For example, requiring more course work might exclude individuals with family responsibilities, especially when universities are distant. Raising written test standards

may exclude some people who can function well in many of the assistant principal functions but do not function well on such tests.

Care must be taken so that valuable elements are not lost in the change process. Putting more responsibility in universities, in local districts, or in professional associations will decrease the sense of legitimacy and the standardization that comes from state certification. And decreasing the involvement of professional associations, local practicing administrators, or universities would risk losing the particular knowledge bases, authority, and expertise of each group. All must be involved but no one should dominate the training and selection process.

Thus the participants in policy making for certification should continue to be the (sometimes tenuous) partnership of state departments of education, education professional associations, and university professors. However, they should first analyze the requirements for the assistant principalship, thinking of the position as the place where educational leaders begin their administrative careers. They should then propose alterations that will strengthen the training and redirect the orientation of assistant principals. In their planning, they should also create procedures and learning experiences so that these administrative candidates know how to address the concerns of all citizen groups (including those who are critical of school systems and their administrators). Learning should include ways to address racism, classism, sexism, and newly empowered teachers in "restructured" schools.

Certification processes should be structured so that the result is certified administrators who are people who constantly strive for improvements in instruction, who lead schools to work well with the community, and who support educator teams to work together to address fundamental problems such as low resources, inequity, inappropriate policies, and inadequate support.

Affiliation-Support

The assistant principal lives with the knowledge that daily work will include problems that are never solved, work that is

never complete, joys that are never noticed, and needs that are seldom acknowledged. Everyone needs to share the joys and grouse about the problems with others who understand. The need for affiliation with peers may be met, but only haphazardly and intermittently, in casual social situations. An "in-group" mentality sometimes develops, providing affiliation and support for some but excluding others.

Instead of haphazard affiliation for a few, assistant principals should create *support groups* that cross district lines, that are open to all assistant principals (and interns working with them), to facilitate sharing of ideas, coping strategies, support, empathy, and networking and offer information on topics of current concern to assistant principals. This could be a grassroots organization or it could be a subgroup of existing professional associations like the National Association of Secondary School Principals. It should, however, preserve the special function of addressing the particular concerns and needs of assistant principals and not be lumped with general administrative concerns.

Sessions such as "How to Define Your Own Job and Still Get Along with Your Principal" or "Using the Curriculum for Discipline Management" as well as informal "gripe-and-brag" and "wine-and-whine" sessions would be particularly useful for groups of assistant principals and would give them a sense of affiliation with group of supportive peers. Accessible, readable materials such as the Phi Delta Kappan booklet, *The Role of the Assistant Principal* (Marshall, 1990), can serve as discussion stimuli. The Peer-Assisted Leadership (PAL) Program is an example of year-long professional development aimed at reducing the isolation of site administrators as well as improving instructional leadership (Mueller & Lee, 1989).

Discretionary Power and Recognition

Many people chafe under the restrictions of being "assistants" in hierarchical organizations, of constantly having to report, ask permission, plead for resources, and work according to someone else's plan. Teachers can close the door and, within limits, do what they think is appropriate with their classes. But

assistant principals often have no door to close and are often required to carry out procedures based on the judgments and values of others.

No amount of training or support will improve the assistant principalship unless there are some areas in their work lives where assistant principals have flexibility, independent resources, control, and the power to be the resident expert. These are basic needs for adult professionals.

When assistant principals push to move into higher positions, they are seeking increased autonomy and flexibility as well as status and money. Assistant principals, to help them persist in the daily challenges of their jobs, must have areas of discretion, authority, and autonomy. Special projects, start-up funds, titles, and management teams are possible structures for providing assistant principals with the opportunity to exercise their discretion and build areas of expertise contributing to the total operational success of the school.

Special Projects

Suppose assistant principals' job descriptions included "developing and managing a special project that contributes creatively to the goals of the school." This would sanction them, allocate them time and resources, and challenge them to explore ideas of their own or borrow ideas from professional journals and conferences, to analyze school needs, to promote their idea, to create structures to implement it, and to have the sense of accomplishment from seeing outcomes from a particular project of their own.

While they would have the responsibility for building a rationale, promoting the project, getting people involved, getting the necessary resources, and managing the project, they would also get the satisfaction and sense of control and opportunity to run with their own ideas. They might find that this opportunity enhances their willingness to stay in the position, but some individuals may find that their projects increase their visibility and their desire to move into higher positions.

The special project would allow assistant principals to develop constructive projects and build independent administrative skills as a legitimate part of their job responsibilities and not as some-

thing that must be negotiated with the principal and relegated to the status of "something you can do after all of the real work is done."

Start-Up Funds

Where possible, school districts can provide a fund of $600 for assistant principals to use for a special project, as seed money. Guidelines should require that the money be used to develop something new that will contribute to the well-being of the school.

Then assistant principals can, without further restrictions, use the money to write grant proposals, to take a course on computers in order to start a computer club, to attend a conference on educational research, to hire a consultant to help on interpersonal relations or community relations, or whatever *they* decide would help the school and their own functioning in it. The expense to the school district would be *more than* repaid in the good will, the new ideas, and possibly the reduced turnover and reduced dissatisfaction of incumbent assistant principals.

Titles

Every educator has some particular area of expertise that can be shared across the district and across the profession. These are often unrecognized and unrewarded, especially when the educator's primary responsibility lies elsewhere. School districts often fail to value the assistant principal who knows a great deal about a specific subject or has an area of expertise. There should be recognition for the assistant who knows the literature about stereotyping in the curriculum, the one who has experience in politics, the one who loves research and evaluation, or the one whose outside activities include lobbying for consumer rights or environmental protection. These people could be resources, special consultants to the school district.

This lack of recognition of special knowledge could be changed by creating a listing of all educators in a district, designating particular areas of expertise and interest that can be drawn from to meet needs that arise. Superintendents, school boards, and principals, then, could draw from this list when they wanted to appoint educators to lead task forces, to serve as liaisons with community groups, to expand program offerings.

Educators across the whole district could draw from this list when they seek advice that is not readily available from the central office, the state department of education, or their professional associations. Through this structure, an assistant principal with hidden talents with computers could become head of the district computer advisory committee and a resource for the entire district. The assistant principal who knows how to eliminate sexism from the curriculum will now become the district's official liaison with the community groups that want sex equity.

From the list, educators (whether or not they have high visibility) have the opportunity to get official credit (a title, travel money, something to put on their résumés) for their contributions. In addition, the district benefits from the wide range of special expertise while, at the same time, providing educators with a sense that their special talents are recognized and valued.

Management Team Structures

The traditional model of the management team is set up with the assumption that administrators manage and teachers do not.

Gross, Shapiro, and Meehan (1980) described a successful implementation of management teamwork in a high school, based on openness of communication and after-school meetings for debriefing, thinking of the administrator's role as serving others and giving credit to each person who contributes.

With a management team structure, decision making, short- and long-range planning, and division of tasks could be done with a teamwork approach, including the principal, assistant principals, department chairs, and teachers in school. Such an approach could reduce the conflicts between teachers and administrators and among administrators.

However, such an approach would require retraining of educators and restructuring the school. Participatory management requires that time be set aside for planning, that administrators and teachers be trained to share in the planning processes, and that administrators wipe out old assumptions about their need to keep everything under tight control.

Management team structures require assistant principals and other educators to learn to articulate their sense of what is

needed. They might first have to *unlearn* the surreptitious ways devised for getting what they want and doing things their way that worked under a structure where they had little say in policymaking.

More Radical Proposals

Reconceptualizing Assumptions About Administration

Even with opportunities for rotating and altering the tasks of assistant principals, many will view the position as undesirable and will continue to leave the position for higher pay and status. And women and minorities will continue to see the evidence of their unequal access. Assumptions about the administrative structure, leadership, and the fundamental purposes of schooling need to be examined and challenged if this trend is to be diminished. The "restructuring" movement and disillusionment with hierarchical leadership are political and intellectual challenges. This section offers more radical thinking that challenges the way we generally think about administration, with important implications for assistant principals.

Beyond Popularized "Restructuring"

Educational administration hierarchies assume that people in higher positions are more important, more worthy of high pay, more correct in their judgments about what policies will work, and better able to decide how to alter the work. This setup is an adaptation of management and behavioral sciences, based on assumptions that the major concerns of administrators are control, maintenance of efficiency, and engineered change. Such assumptions ignore the *social and cultural* goals of education. Such assumptions cut off the possibility of cultivating a "climate of professional dedication" among those who work in schools. They also demean the professional sense of people who are *closest* to the actual work of the schools, managing instruction, by placing them at the bottom of the hierarchy. They exacerbate the tension assistant principals experience with teachers and higher-level administrators.

However, theorists and practitioners have promoted the importance of including the people who *implement* policies in decision making. As early as 1926, Mary Parker Follett (p. 33) asserted that, to get things done well, one should "unite all concerned in a study of the situation," for decision making rather than simply giving orders from on high. Many have proposed various devices, such as the management team approach and quality circles. These ideas are promising but require a change in assumptions about the status and the proper role of leadership. Current proposals for restructuring do not require such changes. In some cases, people at the bottom of the hierarchy may see restructuring proposals as simply another manipulative device to obtain cooperation, particularly continuing to leave them holding the major implementation work and no new status, resources, or rewards for their efforts (*Preparation of Principals*, 1989).

The ways of thinking about and responding to decision making will not change while the hierarchy remains intact. They will not change without challenging the assumption that people in higher positions know best and should have more power, status, pay, and final authority.

Real restructuring will occur only with shifts in the prevailing definitions, metaphors, and assumptions that are the basis of what we call leadership, administration, and the structure of schools. This section provides provocative insights.

New metaphors for leaders. A cursory examination of educational administration textbooks shows that most illustrations are line and staff charts of hierarchies in schools. Such is the graphic image presented to train educational leaders. Models, pictures, and metaphors are lenses for understanding and challenging assumptions about leadership in administration and the structure of schools. Schein (1985) has proposed that good leaders are culture managers. This proposal presents a very different model or metaphor for educational administration.

Mitchell (1983) reported that educators organize their work according to the images, ideas, or metaphors that they use to conceptualize their jobs (rather than by specific knowledge or organizational rules). The dominant management metaphors are managing as a machine, an organism, a marketplace, and a

conversation. The first two, machine and organism, are built upon a hierarchy. But these metaphors do not fit principals because they do not, in fact, receive and interpret the information they would need to control instructional process. Neither can they control the directives that come from the community, central office, or the state. Schools are not neat hierarchies. The marketplace metaphor has dominated education policy development, such as in categorical programs and management by objectives, in that it links resource distribution to specific educational tasks. This metaphor is frequently adopted by central office administrators, offering explicit goals and rewards for specific performance.

The fourth metaphor, managing conversations, originates from an affective bond between organizational participants and is based upon their shared meanings embodied in a common language. Management's function is to articulate common purposes and motivate individuals to cooperate in carrying out those purposes. Mitchell found that principals neglect this metaphor and thus fail to encourage organizational participants to share in the cultural meaning making within the organization. Yet this is where most of the work of assistants occurs.

This analysis raises questions about how well we prepare, support, reward, and promote administrators in this practice of building cultural meaning and communicating common purpose. Symbolic leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1984; Meyer & Rowan, 1978) helps an organization's participants (janitors, students, parents, teachers, and so on) coalesce around common ideas about purpose. Stories and ceremonies and heroes and heroines are elements of the organizational culture. Symbolic leadership incorporates an understanding and appreciation of these cultural forces. Assistant principals need to learn this in their formal and informal training. Staff development and university courses and internships should incorporate literature and experiences to develop appreciation of leadership through conversations, through collaborative meaning making. Such instruction is not enough, however. Fledgling administrators need to see symbolic leadership modeled. Most important, they need to value symbolic leadership as an interaction that incorporates the full range of (often conflicting) goals of the varied participants and *not* as a method for using cultural tools to manipulate people.

Analysis of metaphors and the language of current administrators is a promising way to uncover latent values and perceptions of those who manage our schools (Bredeson, 1988; Marshall, 1988). Assistant principals need to understand the importance of culture and the need to identify the ways their values (and their metaphors and language) guide their behavior. With such understandings, they would be more self-reflective and capable of working within the organizational culture.

Intentional leadership. In contrast to the bureaucratic model, Wissler and Ortiz (1988) posed the idea of "intentional leadership," in which the leader starts with a vision that will give structure to the process and help to resolve potential problems associated with the envisioned change. The intentional leader holds certain beliefs regarding people and the way they function in organizations, beliefs in their strengths and powers, which can be released if individuals are given room, faith, and trust to exert their power and capabilities (Wissler, 1984). The intentional leader defines the framework, provides the resources, does the monitoring, and makes it possible for people to function in such a manner. In intentional leadership, the organization's members work together on a "project" that actualizes the organization's values. The leader's function is to make choices that improve the human condition through the use of the organization and to coordinate the work on the project. The organization is an instrument for releasing the power for good in individuals.

As can be seen, this model is quite different than the models in which maintenance of bureaucratic rules and control are predominant. Some analysts (e.g., Clark & Meloy, 1988) have suggested that such a model is more appropriate for the administration of a sociocultural organization like a school.

These ideas require reconceptualizing school administration so that higher administrators are viewed as coordinators of services and resources, servants of those who do the work of instruction. The valued positions would be those closest to instruction. Teachers and the administrators who work most directly in support of instruction would have the highest value, status, and pay. Such a reconceptualization would require radical change not only in the thinking but also in the structures of

school organizations. The assistant principalship is the ideal position for trying such restructuring.

Management team structures come closest to implementing intentional leadership when they involve all educators in defining problems and creating solutions. The assistant principalship, viewed as a training ground for intentional leaders, would be a valuable, desirable position for facilitating instruction and for coordinating resources as part of the management team.

Specialization, role negotiation, and job rotation are several alternatives for restructuring assistant principalships so that the ambiguity, conflict and competition, and harmful effects of limited job descriptions can be lessened. But more substantial structural alterations would be required to reconceptualize the educational system's hierarchy so that administrators are viewed as coordinators and administrators and teachers work as teams. School administrators would have to question the value of hierarchical control. Those in power in the hierarchy would have to consider sharing that power. The first step would be in redefining the assistant principalship, the training ground for education leaders.

Leaders as Critical Humanists

Management, rational systems, and bureaucratic theories have guided the training of administrators and the structuring of schooling in the past. Under these theories, problems can be fixed by managers' time-and-motion studies, PPBS, MBOs, or the latest proposed stratagem[1]. However, new theoretical developments would guide a very different view of the role of leaders (including assistant principals) and organizations.

First, critics ranging from national commissions (e.g., *A Nation at Risk*) to feminists to critical theorists have declared the traditional school system a failure. Scholars note the decline of the legitimacy of the schools (see, for example, Boyd, 1982).

One theoretical critique asserts that organizations are "social constructions of reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; T. Greenfield, 1986). Such a view empowers people to create their own meaning and purpose for their organization. Leaders' roles then are to coordinate symbols and ceremonies as well as resources

and tasks to support the collective meaning making. Leadership and administration are not seen as an apolitical rational/technical operation; instead, they are an interactive process that requires taking political values-based stances aimed at directing schools toward achieving the goals of dominant groups. Leaders' value stances, therefore, are more important foci than their technical expertise with budgets and buses. As Greenfield (1986, p. 20) said,

> [The] fact-driven model of decisionmaking and rationality has dominated administrator training programs for educational administrators. . . . They miss the meaning of human action. . . . They oversimplify administrative problems and overstate the claim that science can solve them. . . . We must seek new models for administrative training—ones that acknowledge responsibility, right judgment, and reflection as legitimately and inevitably part of administrative action. Such programs would lead the field of study toward what Scott has called "revolutionary moral discourse" and away, therefore, from instruction in a putative science of organization and administration.

The feminist critique of bureaucracy and leadership asserts (a) that leadership and organization theories are the brainchildren of male scholars looking primarily at the leaders and the workings in male-dominated and male-normed organizations (Shakeshaft, 1987) and (b) that bureaucracies function to discredit and exclude those who raise uncomfortable questions and defy the norms, thus excluding women and minorities and reinforcing the power of the power elite (Ferguson, 1984). Such a critique does help explain the continuing underrepresentation of women in leadership roles even when decades of research document their competencies and scholars have compiled research documenting that women leaders have competencies that should make them the most desired leaders for instruction-centered, democratic organizations (see Marshall, 1989; Ortiz & Marshall, 1988). So, old questions like "what competencies are lacking in women?" or "what organizational barriers prevent women's access?" are out of date. New critiques posit that bureaucracies actually filter out aberrant values, perspectives, and language, especially women's (Ferguson, 1984).

Marshall and Mitchell (1989) demonstrated how this feminist critique helps explain the experiences of female assistant principals. The deeper question remains: How can women see and articulate the injustices of a system structured in the masculine?

With new theory and research demonstrating women's moral decision making to be different than men's—emphasizing caring and connectedness more than rights and justice (Gilligan, 1982)—and consistent evidence that women school administrators stay connected to instruction, teachers, and children, this question is important not only for examining equity for women but also for examining the dominant values in the professional culture of administration.

Critical theorists pose an upsetting challenge. Tracing the historical development of institutions, they demonstrate ways in which schools function to assist dominant power elites by suppressing the expression and aspirations of the poor and powerless and training a class of workers to comply with workplace routines. The factory model of schooling, with time-clocked units of learning, division of labor (e.g., subject area teachers and administrative specialists), and attempts to standardize parts (e.g., children), was built into the structure of schools. Schooling became the answer to the challenge of "the unwashed hordes" of immigrants in the late 1800s and early 1900s; schools could transform this immense variety of new Americans into a homogenized whole through political socialization in the curriculum (e.g., American history) and in the "hidden curriculum" (e.g., sex role socialization, traditional American family values).

But critical theorists' challenges are not merely historical exercises; they demand an examination to discover how schools continue the practices of sorting and homogenizing and how schools continue to work for the benefit of dominant power groups and function actually to disadvantage the already disadvantaged. These critiques—coupled with facts about minorities' unequal access to the benefits of schooling, young people committing suicide and children bearing children, women gaining doctorates but not jobs in educational administration, and high superintendent turnover—leave scholars and critics questioning the fundamental assumptions undergirding educational administration.

A new model of leadership (and not the rational science of administration) has been proposed and named. According to Burns (1978), organizations need "transformative leaders" whose purposes and values are authentic and well articulated. Leaders should be "transformative intellectuals" (Giroux, 1988) or "critical humanists" (Foster, 1986), who constantly reflect on how the organization is working to expand human potential and transform society to eradicate racism, classism, and sexism. Instead of learning how to manage and control community unrest, teacher insubordination, student dropout rates, or "uppity" women, such leaders would engage in a continuous quest to examine the root causes of such dissatisfaction and alter the organizational arrangements that hurt people's opportunities.

Training critical humanists. The *worst* training experience for critical humanist leaders would be the traditional mix of formal and informal socialization described in Chapter 2. Traditional university programs—closely tied to training and certifying individuals to fit into the professional culture that emphasizes administration as a rational science with specific knowledge and expertise—emphasize bureaucratic management and control. On-the-job training in the knowledge, skills, and values of administration, occurring most intensively during the assistant principalship, aided or not by sponsors and mentors, actually *cripples* the individual's potential to be a critical humanist. Gandhi, Jane Addams, and Martin Luther King would not have survived assistant principalhood; moving into higher leadership would have been out of the question.

Better training experiences would include the following kinds of components:

(1) critical and feminist theorist professors and scholars in residence and in continuous dialogue with students and with local practitioners and policymakers,

(2) history and philosophy of science taught so that, when they do research, students understand how their questions are affected by the dominant forces that lend legitimacy to knowledge,

(3) courses in qualitative inquiry so that students acquire skills in uncovering the individual and subjective nature of the meanings that people make as they view events,

(4) courses on the history of organizations and institutions, especially schools, so that students understand the social forces that structured our current systems of schooling,

(5) courses on the social context of schooling so that students see the economic, sociocultural, and political webs within which schooling takes place,

(6) internships in very different organizations (e.g., child-centered British schools, the Ministry of Education in Israel or China, social welfare agencies, state legislatures) so that students see different models of organizations and leadership, different goals, and the workings of organizations that connect with and affect the lives of children,

(7) internships in schools that have successfully created new structures (e.g., teacher and parent decision making, schools within schools, flattened management, peer-teacher supervision and evaluation) and schools with different philosophies (e.g., Montessori or other child-centered schools, private schools, or magnet schools with special cultures and specialized purposes),

(8) support for exploring in an interdisciplinary mode (e.g., a minor in anthropology, social work, political science, law, early childhood, public health),

(9) courses preparing educational leaders to work toward equity goals (see Marshall, 1989; Shapiro & Parker, 1989, for suggestions),

(10) course experiences aimed at assisting leaders in identifying and articulating their values and planning appropriate action plans and career strategies, and

(11) course experiences applying different metaphors of management, drawing implications for leaders' activities, attitudes, and behaviors, and discussing ways that the different metaphors would affect the structures of the daily lives of school participants (e.g., using Gareth Morgan's, 1986, text).

Such an approach would be declared to be impractical, expensive, and heretical. It would fly in the face of current proposals from the University Council for Educational Administration, most state legislatures, and administrators' professional organizations. It would make most superintendents uncomfortable.

However, such an approach would educate potential school leaders in critically examining tradition and identifying new organizational arrangements to enhance the efficacy of schooling for all. It would also demand that communities recognize and support a new model of leadership. Instead of the quick-decision, in-charge paternalist who works with the local power structure, this leader would not command. Instead of calling teachers and parents in for a day of being empowered in decision making, she would create structures to include others in framing issues for debate. It would take longer and be a more ambiguous process, but it should lead to an enhanced sense of ownership in the goals and processes. It would lead educators and their constituents to make demands that would embarrass powerful people, but it has the potential to get beyond quick and cheap reforms and ask deeper questions (like "what are our values that support a political system that provides tax breaks for the wealthy but cuts school lunch programs?").

Instead of assuming she should adopt the bureaucratic model, the critical humanist leader might work within a metaphor or model of the organization as a family, a network, a kinship system. Instead of assuming that schooling should function to help kids learn to compete and win, this new leader might raise questions about whether the curriculum should emphasize team building and cooperative work.

Looking at Equity Through Cultural and Political Lenses

Something in the culture of school administration locks out most women and minorities. No rational argument can be posed for women's unequal access. Their competence and special qualities are well documented. However, supported by strong and ancient traditions asserting "women's place" and assumptions that men should not have to subject themselves to women bosses or be paid less than women, those in power keep the power. Educators who are from minority groups can see that only a select few of them will attain leadership positions, and they will often be marginal members of the administrative culture.

A more radical and useful approach to explain and change this lockout comes from adopting a political perspective. Minogue

(1983, p. 73) said, "Nothing gets done which is unacceptable to dominant or influential political groups, which may be defined to include the 'bureaucratic leadership' group." Leadership behaviors, activities, values, and attitudes of women and minorities might be somewhat different—and thus be judged as deficient. To disassemble the lockout requires those in power to give up their exclusive control over the definitions of what is right, proper, and good.

Recent critiques (e.g., Marshall, 1989; Shakeshaft, 1987) have recommended expanded models of leadership, asserting that women's qualities as leaders can, in fact, widen the definitions and demonstrate qualities that can improve schools. Several reviews of literature on women in school administration have found a consistent pattern (Adkison, 1981; Fishel & Pottker, 1975; Ortiz & Marshall, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1987):

(1) Women exert more positive efforts on instructional supervision.
(2) Women produce more positive interactions with community and staff.
(3) Women's administrative styles tend to be more democratic, inclusive, and conflict reducing.
(4) Women secondary principals engage in more cooperative planning.
(5) Women elementary principals observe teachers more frequently.
(6) Women superintendents tour the schools more.
(7) Women principals and superintendents spend more time in the classroom and in discussions with teachers about instruction and the academic content of the school.

Newly conceptualized research asks: "How can we enhance our understanding of leadership by studying women's experience as leaders?" Notice the emphasis on valuing women's experience rather than searching for the ways that women need to change to fit in. Interesting and promising leads indicate that women school administrators (a) are less concerned about bureaucracy (Bell & Chase, 1989), (b) are more inclined to want to spend energy on instructional matters, (c) spend time on counseling and reducing conflict (Mitchell, 1987), and (d) take more work home and spend more time in schools and in monitoring instructional programs.

Finally, social psychologists and sociolinguists suggest that women's decision making is more oriented toward caring for everyone (Gilligan, 1982) and that women's ways of speaking, while less assertive and authoritarian, include more listening (Dunlap, 1989) and have the effect of eliciting input and participation in groups (see Marshall, 1988, for expansion of this argument).

Such differences would, presumably, favor women's ascendance in an era of school leadership that emphasizes instructional leadership and an openness to teacher involvement in designing the work of schools. In this era of participatory management, teacher empowerment, and instructional leadership, women's leadership should be recruited and supported. But women are not taking over school administration.

The demand for equity and the students' needs for role models are simple and straightforward arguments to end the lockout. But, even after decades of "affirmative action," little has changed.

Thus, instead of recommending mere equity (which has not worked), a more radical demand would be to favor openly women candidates for school leadership. This could help women and minorities and help schools too.

Examining Fundamental Dilemmas

In an insightful reflection on the role of the assistant principal, Iannaccone (1985) recommended using the assistant as a "window on the building" or a lens for examining the inner workings of the school site. Such micro analysis would, he said, uncover critical and chronic dilemmas in the working of schools because assistants, in their daily work, smooth over those dilemmas and keep things running.

Indeed, the research on assistant principals' assumptive worlds (see Chapter 3) reveals that assistants learn to cope with chronically scarce resources, the need to comply with dominant values and exhibit loyalty within the hierarchical system, the need to distance themselves from teachers and teaching, the need to spend their time covering their bases as defined by the job description even when they see more pressing needs, and so on. In fact, part of their enculturation as administrators is

surviving "professional shock" (Marshall, 1985a) as they face dilemmas. In one case study, an administrator articulated the array of dilemmas he faced as he tried to decide whether to learn to comply and to reinforce the school system that was so inadequate at meeting the needs:

> You give up after a while, or you just don't want the hassle, the ultimate responsibility. . . . I was anxious for a promotion to principal. But this system, the American system, is not going to support inner-city schools. I know people with money—they don't care about these kids. . . . Reagan has no sensitivity to the problems here. We have a good superintendent who says we're responsible. But to function in an environment where no one cares but us—why take on the burden? I like the kids and they like me, but I don't see much hope in the total world. Do businesses really want black people to move up in society? I see the potential in kids but in reality, society wants things the way they are. Capitalist society is based on having working people. Society allows us to pick a few to succeed. Yet the superintendent is there cheering us all on; but I have to survive. Power and money don't give a damn. That's why I'm not sure I want to be a principal. The physical plant is falling apart. Do I want the ultimate responsibility for this? . . . Would I want to be a superintendent? . . . The real dream for me is to have money to have some representative outcome for all the input. (Marshall, 1985b, p. 132)

Entry-level administrators carry on these kinds of inner debates, which bring to the surface the continuous conflicts with teachers and parents, and conflicts over curriculum that bores students, and over student control and discipline systems that denigrate children and include sexism, racism, and classism.

Currently, school administrators learn to cope with, manage, and often repress discussion about these dilemmas. Mentors and sponsors tell them to stop being so sensitive and to pick their battles. Professors teach them about the political structure of schooling so they can better manipulate that political structure.

However, these dilemmas could be the source of powerful critical examination of schooling if they were treated as "windows on the building" for discovery rather than as problems to repress. Retreats aimed at identifying, describing, and creating action

plans around such dilemmas could lead to radical change. In a safe environment, far from the demands on their job descriptions and the need to fit into the administrative culture, assistant principals could generate descriptions of what they see going wrong, with facilitators there to lead them to identify strategies for change. Such a process, done in isolation, with no thought about the larger system, would be a time-waster at best and could generate distrust and damage careers. But, as a national movement aimed at valuing the perspectives of the assistant principal to have a clearer view of the school site, it could work.

Summary

This chapter proposes a variety of plans for improving the assistant principalship. It offers several ideas for rethinking our ways of structuring the hierarchy and roles in the system. It identifies ways to alter structures in educational systems to affect assistant principals' training and selection, their satisfaction and support, and their ability to cope. The suggestions would expand the functions, provide support and rewards, and advance equity in the assistant principalship.

Some school districts may have experimented with similar plans and made attempts to alter and improve the position. They should share their ideas—in articles in educators' journals and at conferences. It is important, however, that all alterations be analyzed to assess not only the immediate benefits but also the positive and negative spin-off effects. Another caution: Ideas developed in one setting may have different effects in another setting. But improving the assistant principalship can be a critical intervention for more overarching improvement in all aspects of schooling.

Note

1. Some acronyms become so popular that they are established as words. However, PPBS stands for "Planning, Program, Budgeting System" and MBO stans for "Management by Objectives."

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Marshall uses an interdisciplinary approach in her study of the assistant principal. Two representative examples of the position illustrate the selection and socialization processes, including an in-depth look at the problems associated with this career step.

For too many educators, the assistant principalship is either out of reach or a necessary evil to be endured if one wishes to advance up the administrative ladder. This book provides the needed information to change the attitudes of both applicant and incumbent, as well as those who will judge his—or *her*—performance.

Catherine Marshall is Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Formerly a teacher in Rhode Island, she decided to complete her Ph.D. at the University of California in Santa Barbara. After a postdoctoral fellowship at UCLA, she served on the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania and then at Vanderbilt University before moving to Chapel Hill in 1991.

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